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ASIATIC NEIGHBOURS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

BANNÛ; OR, OUR AFGHAN FRONTIER.

TRÜBNER & Co., 1876.

DAVID LESLIE: A STORY OF THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, 1879.

MUSALMANS AND MONEYLENDERS.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, 1886.

ASIATIC NEIGHBOURS

BY

S. S. THORBURN

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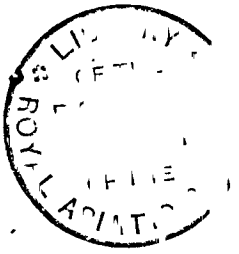

WITH TWO MAPS.

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PREFACE.

THIS book is the result of my own self-education in Central Asian affairs. It is not intended for specialists, whose opinions are already fixed, but for the general reader, whether British or Indian.

Although by 1892 I had served for sixteen years in trans-Indus and for seven in cis-Indus districts west of Lahore, I had no exact knowledge of the subject, having only read casually a little of its extensive literature. However, like most Panjabi Anglo-Indians, I had my beliefs, though unqualified to hold opinions.

I was convinced that our close-border system, varied by occasional *purdah*-lifting expeditions, conducted on ultra-humanitarian principles, which cause the least possible loss to the enemy at the greatest possible expenditure to ourselves, would never make any lasting impression on our wild hill-neighbours, and that the only way to gain their respect was to knock them down first, and then

when prostrate to raise them up, and treat them with firm and generous kindness.

As for Afghanistan, I was certain that any war with her was money thrown away, our first and long-neglected duty being to strengthen our existing line of frontier with forts, roads, and railways. These works completed, I thought we might advance, if necessity arose, to a few chosen strategic positions in the mountains, the nearer the Indus the better, from which, relying on our concentrated strength, we might look down with unconcern on the chronic troubles of Afghanistan, indifferent alike to her friendship or hostility, to Russia's abstention or interference,—certain in the latter case, from our own experiences, that, did our ponderous rival undertake the Russofication of the Afghans, she would waste her resources in the attempt.

In discussions with friends in the Panjab Frontier Force I had little support. Most of them were for action of the advance-to-Herat and fight-it-out-on-the-Oxus kind, I for caution and working out the cost of every eventuality before making a fresh move in a game which had already (1877) cost India many millions sterling. They were soldiers, I a civilian and Revenue officer, hence possibly the divergence in our respective views.

When war with Afghanistan was declared in 1878, it was to them a welcome change from hum-

drum routine to excitement, with possibilities of distinction. To me it appeared the opening scene in a revised version of the "Great Game" drama of 1838-42. At the time, the late Lord Lawrence warned his countrymen that the only possible issue would be a vast expenditure, with no advantages for India commensurate with the outpouring of treasure. The event justified that statesman's forebodings, though he did not live to see the miserable ending of that wasteful war.

As time went on, the march of events strengthened my preconceived conclusions. We launched successively three expeditions against the politically unimportant Black Mountain tribes. The two first were of the tender maternal type, and almost beneficial to the hostile tribesmen; the last meant business, but the enemy, knowing the fact, would not show, hence not a shot was fired. The three together produced no results beyond the loss to pauper India of a quarter of a million sterling.

At the same time an active policy was being pushed from end to end of our N.W. Frontier; the Gilgit Agency was re-constituted and extended; Hunza-Nagar and Chilas were conquered and annexed—most of the cost being thrown on Kashmir, though incurred for Imperial purposes. In Afghanistan things seemed drifting into a situation analogous to that which preceded the war of 1878-80;

the Amir was sullen, almost defiant, and Anglo-Indian Jingoes were all agog for a new war, whenever His Highness should, like his uncle before him, appeal to Russia for protection.

Eventually better counsels prevailed, and for the rest of his reign the Amir should continue our firm friend and ally. What his unstable subjects will do after his death no man can foresee.

It was in 1892, before the happy change in our relations with the Amir had, for the time at least, falsified pessimistic anticipations, that I began to collect and read books and parliamentary and other papers on Russia generally, her advance into Central Asia, Afghanistan, and our N.W. Frontier.

The result of my studies appears in the following pages.

My old belief as to the right mode of dealing with the independent tribes, now wholly within our political frontier, is confirmed; but the grounds for my hasty and presumptuous dogmatism on the larger and more important Indo-Russian question are entirely shaken. The result of my reading has surprised myself, for if ever a man began a political study with strong prepossessions in favour of a particular line of action, and ended it with changed views, I am that man.

If those who glance through the following pages come to conclusions similar to mine, and take

every opportunity of disseminating their views, the Government of the day, no matter what party may be in power, will be *pro tanto* encouraged, by the formation of a clear, decided, and well-informed public opinion, to pursue a definite and resolute policy both in Afghanistan and India.

It remains for me to express my grateful thanks to the friends who have by advice and information helped me in the preparation of this book.

S. S. THORBURN.

BOURNEMOUTH, *October* 15, 1894.

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ASIATIC NEIGHBOURS.

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INTRODUCING THE BONE OF CONTENTION.

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The Amir on the political situation.

SOME years ago a story was current in Northern India that the Amir of Afghanistan, our present good friend and ally, but then estranged and almost hostile neighbour, had in open Darbar likened our Queen-Empress to an old tigress. His Highness, it was alleged, had been expounding the political situation to his assembled notables, but, owing to their want of apprehension, had failed to make it clear to them. He had recourse, therefore, to the familiar Eastern device of a parable.

"A swan," he said, "was once swimming in a

Parable of the Swan, the Wolves, and the Tigress.

pond, watched with hungry eyes from one bank by a pack of wolves, and from the other by an old tigress. From fright or curiosity, the swan incautiously approached the latter. The tigress clawed at him and tore out some of his feathers. In his distress he swam over to the other bank, when the wolves made a rush and would have torn him to pieces, had he not escaped into deep water. Feeling himself secure, he resolved in future to confine his movements to the middle of the pond. There, resting at his ease, he noticed how tigress and wolves were snarling at each other, and how very shallow the water was near the edges, where the quarrelsome animals were standing. He reflected that were the pond to dry up, the tigress might, and the wolves certainly would, devour him."

"And then?" asked one of the listening notables, carried away by his interest in the story.

"And then, having no longer any dividing water between them or any common prey, they would fight and destroy each other," said the Amir conclusively.

"And which would win?" asked His Highness's favourite son, with the innocent presumption of youth.

"I said they would destroy each other," replied the Amir with a frown.

However, after a minute or two spent in reflection, he added, with slow deliberation, "If they did not kill each other, the wolves being many

might win, which God forbid! However, the pond is still deep, and Inshallah will never dry up."

His Highness then explained that he was the swan, the pond the mountains of Afghanistan, the wolves Russia, and the tigress England in India. Application of the parable.

Whether true or not, the parable hits off the situation between the three Asiatic neighbours, about whose future relations books and magazine articles have been, and still are being, written by the score, and newspaper leaders by the hundred. Notwithstanding such a flood of literature, the British public generally take very little interest in the subject; but those who have studied it, whether Radicals or Unionists, are now less divided than they were, during the long years when our policy in Central Asia was the football of party, made to serve the parliamentary strife of the hour, the Opposition discrediting the action of the Government, whatever it was, and when itself in power upsetting as far as possible all that its predecessors in office had done. Those evil days, so wasteful to the Indian Exchequer, so baneful to our interests in Afghanistan, ended ten years ago, when the incidents culminating in the "Panjdeh affair" (1885) convinced all England that firmness, preparedness, and continuity in foreign policy were essential conditions to the maintenance of the integrity of our Indian Empire.

Russia had then attained the first goal of her ambition in Central Asia, the possession of Merv, "the key of Herat," a common boundary with Russia's goals in Central Asia.

Afghanistan, and outposts within striking distance of Herat, "the key of India." She has since been consolidating her position, and is now waiting for a conjuncture which will enable her to fulfil her self-announced destiny in Central Asia, and secure for herself a practically conterminous frontier with India along the watershed of the Hindu Kush. She would then be in a position to fetter England's action in Europe by making the continuance of the *pax Britannica* in India dependent on her goodwill towards us as a neighbour in Asia.

Disposal of the space still intervening between Russia and India.

That Russia and England have long been gravitating toward each other in Central Asia is a matter of history. That either can easily conquer and hold Afghanistan, the region intervening between them, is a fact recognised by both Powers, as well as by the Afghans themselves. Whether it would be wise for either to do so is a question on which there is still division of opinion. The initial expenses would be heavy, but the net cost of occupation would also be large, say four or five millions annually — so poor and difficult is the country, so intractable the barbarous Muhammadan tribes of its northern and more important half. A conterminous frontier would greatly increase the recurring deficit, because further costly preparation would be necessary against the possible intrigues and attacks of the rival Power. Thus from a purely business standpoint both Russia and England should maintain their present political frontiers. As a fact, a powerful party in Russia and the most forward

school of politicians and soldiers in England and India seek a nearer approximation, the former under the conviction that their country will thereby become offensively stronger against India, and the latter with the hope that England's great Asiatic dependency will by such means be less assailable by Russia.

Questions for consideration.

Postulating that Russia's advance towards India will be continued whenever opportunity offers, until she is certain that one step nearer must constrain us to declare war against her, we have to discover the line up to which, if not already reached, we may possibly permit her to push forward without the arbitrament of war. On the assumption that that line has not yet been attained by Russia, we have further to consider whether we should occupy and annex, or only mediatise, if possible, the still intervening space—we ourselves standing fast inside our present political frontier. If an advance by Russia is held to necessitate a corresponding forward move on our part, then under what conditions and to what localities should it be made? Would it not be wiser in any case that England should spend what India can afford on completing the defences of her present frontier, and leave her huge impecunious rival to waste her resources in conquering and holding the whole or greater part of Afghanistan? Could we honourably and safely do so? Does not our engagement with the Amir bind us to defend the integrity of his kingdom against encroachment by Russia? If so, how can

we give effect to that guarantee, and should we and would we do so?

Statement of subjects and order of notice.

As answers to these questions largely depend on the relative powers, present and prospective, of injuring each other, possible to the two rival empires, as well as on the probable action of the Afghans should one or both occupy strategic positions in their mountains, it will be advisable before attempting to come to conclusions on the subject to give some account of ourselves in India, as well as of the Russian and Afghan peoples, and their respective countries and governments. It will further be advisable to examine in some detail the position on our North-Western frontier, and to briefly notice the chain of events which has brought two great European Powers face to face in the wilds of Central Asia.

CHAPTER II.

INDIA RESTIVE UNDER MACHINE RULE.

INDIA STRONG IF SYMPATHETICALLY GOVERNED—DISCONTENT ON THE INCREASE—MACHINE RULE—THE REIGN OF LAW AND THE MASSES —SIMPLER LAW WANTED FOR AGRICULTURISTS—ALL MEN NOT EQUAL —UNSYMPATHETIC LEGISLATORS — GRADATIONS OF MAN — PEASANT EXPROPRIATION—NATIVE FEELING ON INDEBTEDNESS—A NO-RENT COMBINATION — VILLAGE HAMPDENS — BUREAUCRATIC RULE — *PERSONNEL* OF SECRETARIATS — A STRONG SECRETARIAT — WESTERN NOSTRUMS—"YOUNG INDIA" AND HIS DEMANDS—REAL INDIA A *CORPUS VILE* — SAHIBS AND NATIVES — OVER-GOVERNMENT — THE GROWTH OF LAW AND LAWYERS—THE *RYOT* RESTIVE UNDER MANY MASTERS—A CASE IN COURT—SYSTEM OF CIVIL JUSTICE—DEGRADATION OF THE PEASANTRY.

India strong if loyal and content.

THE history of our growth from small traders to rulers of a vast and populous empire is familiar to all Englishmen. Our nation generally is accustomed to believe that India being statistically prosperous her people are loyal and contented, and that if there be some ill-conditioned classes who are not so, the fault is theirs, not ours—*Sua si bona norint.*

If our self-complacency rests upon a sure foundation, England in India will be strong enough to defend her great dependency against any external enemies, should they seek to disturb her peace. Were an invasion imminent, or in progress even,

we may feel confident that, under wise and sympathetic government, her 250 millions of unwarlike agriculturists would continue quiescent and law-abiding, scratching the soil, harvesting their crops, and paying their heavy taxes in silent submission, as long as their local officers remained at their posts. As to the remaining 50 millions, two-thirds of whom are a fighting peasantry concentrated in the Panjab, Oude, and Rajputana, and scattered in the other provinces of the peninsula, we may be equally assured that their young men would enlist freely and fight faithfully for a Sarkar which, as all India knows, honours its native soldiery as veritable pillars of the State.

Discontent on the increase.

But, granting all this, what about the postulate? Does the present system of civil administration satisfy the peoples of India; and if so, have they reason to believe in its continuance? Are they collectively, whether directly under us, or under native princes ruling in imperfect imitation of our methods, as contented to-day as they were twenty years ago, or even in the darkest days of 1857, when the mutiny of the pampered and mismanaged Sepoy army left the masses almost unmoved? To such questions the only possible answer must be in the negative. The natives generally are less content and less trustful of us than they were ten, twenty, or more years ago, and yet our administration is still in all probability better, purer, and less selfish than that of any other governing Power in the world. Though physically, no doubt, our hold over India is now

stronger than it ever was before, sentimentally it is weaker.

The Englishman in authority is no longer reverenced as a superior being whose will is law. To the educated native he is now merely one in a long gradation of officials whose every action is questionable. To the masses he is a scribbling and inscrutable functionary, whose duty is to execute the will of a distant, unfeeling, and incomprehensible power called Government. Those masses are now, with rare exceptions, ignorant of the personality of their district officer, as he is of the names and characteristics of their leading men. Office-bound as he is, he has little time to acquire a knowledge of his district. Before the Mutiny the people had rulers; now they have only rules. Machine rule in India.

The change from the patriarchal system to the intricate uniformity of the present reign of law was perhaps inevitable, but it is nevertheless disapproved by the people. They are astute enough to see that the elaborate legal machinery of the civilised West benefits the rich and intelligent at the expense of the poor and ignorant. What the latter want is cheap equity and rapid finality; what they get is costly unintelligible law, which often ruins them before finality is attained. To them the sympathetic face and rough justice of the personal ruler is preferable to the refined law of the judicial Sphinxes of to-day, whose elaborate decisions do not follow "equity and good conscience," but the arguments of the more persuasive pleader, supported by the most The reign of law and the masses.

recent rulings of a Chief or High Court. The technicalities of procedure and the hair-splitting in judgments are faults not so much of the judiciary as of the legislature of India.

Simpler law for masses required than for classes.

The existing fabric has been gradually evolved in the last thirty-five years by a succession of able lawyers versed in the systems of Europe, but ignorant of the sentiments of the Indian peoples. What may be necessary for the decision of disputes arising from the complex relations of highly educated Westerns is wholly unsuitable for the masses in India, nine-tenths of whom are poor illiterate peasants, whose highest aspirations rise to a humble hope that the next harvest may suffice to fill their bellies (their own expression), pay their taxes, and meet the interest due on their debts. In England a lawsuit is a costly luxury, indulged in by the rich and quarrelsome alone; in India it is, owing to over-government, a necessity for all classes, a debt-collecting instrument for creditors, and the only means open to agriculturists for the settlement of their generally simple disputes *inter se*. It has no terrors for the mercantile and money-lending classes.

They have money at command, education, and subtle intelligences which delight in the intricacy and surprises of a good case in court. But, for the peasant, artisan, or village menial—who form the bulk of the peoples of India—it often means ruin. What is wanted to bring our system of civil justice more into accord with the feeling of agricultural India is a large restriction in the classes of disputes

cognisable by our courts, a simplification in procedure, and, when the decree is in favour of a non-agriculturist, the exclusion of arable land altogether and of more than a fixed proportion of the produce from attachment and sale on executions.

Legislative Councils in India are rarely in full sympathy with the people. The eyes of the Legislative Member of the Council of the Governor-General are fixed on Western models, and his mind is stored with Western precedents and ideas of symmetry and uniformity. Other members, both ordinary and "additional for making laws and regulations," are either cast in his mould, follow his lead, or if they have time, knowledge, and inclination for independence, find themselves in a minority. Provincial legislative Councils do not live in such a remote atmosphere. Most of their members understand the people better, but their powers are very restricted, and some provinces—as, for instance, the Panjab—have no legislative Council at all.

Legislators out of touch with the people.

The cardinal principle underlying all European legislation and common law is, that all men are equal. But in India men never were, and never can become within a measurable period, equal. The fabric of society is built up of many tribes and castes, each with numerous gradations inside itself, each conserving as a matter of life and death the customs, prejudices, and sentiments of a time which to us progressivists appears the Dark Ages. The "new India," the "young India" of Congresswalas and their ignorant English backers, has no existence

All men are not equal.

except in the imaginations of idealists or traitors. In cities and towns a glimmering exists amongst a small percentage of educated minds of what government on Western principles means, and the most comprehensive of those minds readily recognise the hopeless unwisdom of the attempt to acclimatise such an exotic as democratic government in India. To govern India for the good of the people—and ourselves—is what we English try to do; to govern her by the people is what Anglo-Indians would promote slowly, because they know that if pushed too rapidly it would mean disintegration and perhaps anarchy.

Varieties of man.

Rural India—that is, all but 5 or 6 per cent of its 300 millions of inhabitants—rubs on as it has done for ages past, in happy ignorance of the new nostrums, content if each morning's prayer be answered, "Lord, give us this day our daily bread." Added to the tribal and caste divisions and subdivisions, and the innate conservatism of each, is the fact that each class has its own inherited intelligence, some being low and some high in the gradation from anthropoid ape to most developed man. Each too—and this is the governing factor for all mankind, individuals as well as nations—has its own recognised position as a potentially fighting force. Amongst the manliest of the manly tribes of Upper India there may be doubt as to whether Sikhs, Gurkhas, or Pathans make the finest soldiers; but there is no doubt that the Musalmans generally are more warlike than the Hindus of the Indian peninsula,

that amongst Musalmans Pathans are the toughest, and that all followers of the Prophet—indeed all the inhabitants of Northern India—look down on Bengalis as talkers, not doers, mere chatterers in a world which is ultimately ruled by force. Nor is there any doubt that the effeminate money-lending urban classes of India, who are under our system reducing the agricultural races to serfdom, would in time of commotion be a source of weakness and not of strength to us.

Peasant expropriation by money-lenders.

The gradual degradation of the old peasantry from the status of landowners to that of tenants under Hindu usurers, formerly in the Panjab at least their dependents, is the direct outcome of the Western system which we have forced upon India. To the Muhammadan tribes of the Panjab west of the meridian of Lahore, who are agriculturists to a man, the transference of proprietary right, and with it power, to the once despised but now feared and sometimes detested Bunnia class, is peculiarly galling. The feeling of bitterness with which those warlike tribes are, with seeming apathy, submitting to the change, exists everywhere and is known to every experienced Settlement and District Officer. When he rides through his villages, if he talks freely with the peasantry, he will constantly hear remarks which show that they indirectly blame the Government for the destruction of the old village communities, and the substitution therefor of what they call "the rule of usurers" (*Sahúkârân-kâ Râj*).

Native feeling on indebtedness.

If a peasant is asked why he began to borrow and so got involved, he explains with a shrug, "To pay the revenue one season when the rains failed," or "to pay a fine," or even "to marry a son" or "to bury a wife"; and invariably he adds, with a reproachful look, "What could I do? The debt was small, but it is the compound interest (*sûd-dar-sûd*) which has ruined me." If asked why he mortgaged a certain plot of land, the reply would be, "Because threatened with a lawsuit if I didn't; and when he sues, the usurer always wins." As likely as not, such a remark would be followed by another, "But what matters? Some day I'll have the land back with the shoe," meaning that the intruder will be beaten out whenever disturbance gives the opportunity. So far the evil is remediable, as up to date since 1857 only about 15 per cent of the cultivated land of the Muhammadan tribes west of Lahore has passed by voluntary or involuntary sale and mortgage into the grip of the money-lending classes. Indebtedness is, however, general, and but for a tacit yet effectual combination amongst English revenue officers to render the decrees of Civil Courts executed against ancestral land and crops practically inoperative, money-lenders would now monopolise quite half of the whole profits of agriculture. So far the Muhammadan peasantry brood submissively over their grievances. They know that their English officers sympathise with them, and strain the law in their favour when they can, and they believe that some day "Government will do some-

thing" to wipe out their debts and reinstate them. They are too poor, too ignorant, too apathetic and fatalistic, to be as yet of interest to the political agitator, whether English or Bengali, hence they have small knowledge of the powers of combination.

Effects of a no-rent combination.

But were they to combine,—were, say, the Muhammadan *zamindars* in a score of the most indebted villages in any district west of Lahore to bind themselves to pay no rent or grain-interest to their Hindu landlords and creditors, and carry out their resolution,—Government would not dare to evict them or use force to compel payment. To attempt either would light a conflagration which might spread from district to district, and compel us to undo in a month the civil legislation and judge-made law of the last thirty years. We have the example of some villages in the Bombay Presidency. In 1875 a comparatively insignificant rising of the peasantry in some twenty villages in the Deccan constrained Government to enact a Deccan Ryots Relief Act, and sweep away in a day half the civil legislative work of a century.[1] If such an insurrection, directed solely against usurers, amongst a weaker and less aggrieved peasantry than are the Panjabis, had so great consequences, we can estimate what would happen did some Panjab villages combine to burn their creditors' books, and start a "no-rent or grain-interest for money-lenders" campaign.

As it is, the western peasantry of the province,

[1] See pp. 69, 70, 'Musalmans and Money-lenders.' Wm. Blackwood & Sons. 1886.

Village Hampdens in the Western Panjab.

the law notwithstanding, are even now not quite helpless. When a creditor becomes wholly obnoxious, and gives his enemies the chance, he is murdered. The assassins are known to the countryside, and honoured as tyrannicides. Should a trial ensue, their clansmen or relations combine, subscribe funds for the defence, and fight the case to the end, with the aid of the best pleaders procurable. If an acquittal is secured, well and good. If a conviction is certain, an old man sometimes becomes the scapegoat, and with sublime devotion sacrifices himself for his younger relations, the real murderers. In some parts of the frontier districts the *zamindars* have a clear perception of their power, and the would-be land-grabbers recognise such tracts as "dangerous," and avoid them. Cis-Indus a dim consciousness of their strength is here and there coming home to our villagers. In many tracts—for instance, in the neighbourhood of Rawalpindi, the largest military cantonment in India—the alien absentee landlord can only safely visit his outlying fields by daylight when accompanied by a few trusty followers. Were he an easy landlord, the fact of his being a land-grabber and a non-resident Hindu would not ordinarily excite popular sentiment against him; but unfortunately money-lenders have rarely much sympathy with their debtors, and consequently exact rents and grain-interest in full, and are hated partly as successful aliens of a once subject class, and partly as rack-renters.

It may be that neither Local nor Supreme Govern-

ment realises the extent to which our system is working evil amongst the people, and preparing their minds for the reception of teaching which must some day give rise to active discontent. Governments in India, whether Supreme or Local, are composed of men most of whose service has been spent in the Secretariats, whose residence has been in centres with comparatively large English populations, and whose intimacies have been with fellow-Englishmen, to whom may be added, as occasional callers and informers, a few educated natives. If, then, the highest officials of the empire, whether heads of Governments or of Departments, have only surveyed India from office chairs in Calcutta or Simla or smaller centres of the same classes, they can hardly be in full touch with the people of their provinces of service. It requires many years of plodding district or settlement experience to learn to see things as the peasantry see them, to appreciate their feelings, to understand why a law or order is acceptable, and if enforced stored in their minds as a grievance.

Tendency to bureaucracy.

Unfortunately civilians are generally caught up young into the different Secretariats—advancing in them, if they are found good writers and hard workers, from appointment to appointment, until after thirty or more years of approved service they are elevated to a governorship. Thus it sometimes happens that neither a Head of a Government nor any of his staff have more than a nominal district experience. That a man may go through his ser-

Personnel of Secretariats.

vice and rise to high office, and yet know no more about India than he might have acquired by reading reports in London, is a regrettable fact, from which the people of a province have occasionally suffered.

A strong Secretariat.

The contention that the initiative lies with District Officers, whose representations are always duly considered, is no answer, because District Officers have rarely time to do more than rush through their current work, and when they do suggest a reform or make a representation a strong Secretariat, jealous for its own power, conscious of its own ability, and naturally averse to avoidable matter, notes on the case so adversely that their chief files it until a more convenient season—which rarely comes—or sends it up to the Government of India in such a way that no action is taken. Indeed the principle of *laissez faire* necessarily rules in all departments, as the disposal of ordinary work absorbs all time; hence the reformer is regarded as a nuisance, especially if he is a District Officer whose *kacheri* composition is often exasperatingly defective to men accustomed to think and write in the remote seclusion of a Secretariat. Even when a move in a new direction receives momentum from the head of a provincial administration, the drag is often applied to it by the Government of India, or later by the Secretary of State for India, so great is the *vis inertiæ* of officialdom.

Western nostrums often

The evolution of our system in India, the imposition of the advanced institutions of free and enlight-

ened England upon the old-world Asiatics of India, appears due, partly to the initiative of Indian legislators, and partly to coercion from Westminster, whenever a weak Government is in power. The net result is unsatisfactory. Our great dependency is a continent of antagonistic races, all but the advanced few as backward as the negroes of Darkest Africa, yet it is governed as if its peoples were homogeneous Westerns of one faith and one common standard of intelligence and education. Under such uniformity of over-government the dumb, inert, unprotected many are preyed upon by the fortunate few, who are appropriating the spoils of our system for themselves. The spoilers are largely men of "light and leading." Some have merely developed the acquisitive faculty, and being fat and content, are well satisfied with the system which has enabled them to rise from insignificance to position. Others, and they are the more numerous, having acquired wisdom's ways without wealth in our schools and colleges, are, like many of the lean and hungry book-learned ones of the world, dissatisfied. Such men, veneered with the teachings of the West, run riot in the new world which their superficial knowledge has opened up to them.

baneful for the masses.'

"India for educated Indians" is their cry. "You have taught us all you know, and yet we are poor men. We can pass all the written examinations; we are graduates of your Universities, barristers-at-law, pleaders, journalists, and yet we are poor fellows. The Bar is already overcrowded, and the

Young India on the duty of Government.

ignorant people won't buy our newspapers though full of instructions. We are inimical to Government and its Sahib officers, and they let pass our anathemas and castigation of abuses, though State prosecutions would increase our circulations: the princes and the nobles of India are different—they buy our papers. A really patriotic man of the noble nature and the high family will take fifty copies for the good of the nation. If he does not, we give exposure to his sins until he does, and then we praise him. Blackmailing is it? We know not the term. To impute the bad motives to all opponents is what all M.P.'s do, and they are all patriotic. We do the same. We are M.P.'s in embryo for India. Yes! we too are the patriots and the natural leaders of our nation. It is each man for himself in this sublunary planet. Your M.P.'s would deprive our people of their opium to make us drink the English spirits. They take off the cotton duties to make us buy the English cottons, starve our own factory hands, and borrow gold in England to increase the Indian tribute. All that is good patriotism for you. Ours is to govern India for India's good; and what is good for our nation's natural leaders is good for the nation. Yes, we claim India for the educated Indians, the true representatives of the nation.

The demands of advanced Congress-walas formulated.

"We demand the simultaneous examinations as ordered in Parliament, the abolition of compensation allowances or their extension to Indians, the special taxation on all the pensions paid out of India, equalisation of salaries for all officers, whether

Indians or Sahibs, holding equal appointments; for what is 'sauce for goose is sauce for gander,' as the proverb says. Further, we demand that all Government stores be purchased in India from the Indian firms, that the cotton duties be reimposed, the Arms Act repealed, and that the volunteering movement be extended to all India, with suitable salaries attached to the proficients.

"Lastly, we record the protest of an overtaxed nation, and demand the abolition of the salt tax, as salt is a necessary of life, and a tax on necessaries is against political-economy principles. We claim the reduction of the land revenue, the free 'higher' education, and the opening of all appointments by competitive examination to all natives: in short, to sum up the case in a nutshell, as at present advised, we demand parliamentary government, on the principle that there can be no taxation without representation."

Such are the claims of "Young India,"—*vide* speeches by Congresswalas, resolutions of Congress, and the Vernacular press *passim*. Although the childish absurdity and inconsequent crudity of most of those aspirations is self-evident, there is a substratum of sound sense in some of them. Sense or non-sense, they represent the ideal India of political doctrinaires of the "Paget M.P." type—men of energy and premature conviction, who, neglected in London, are appreciated in Calcutta for a week or two during a cold-weather excursion to the East. By "Young India" is meant student India, lettered

Sense in some of the demands.

India, the product of our "higher education," the men who swallow without assimilating all iconoclastic literature, from the writings of Tom Paine to those of George; the men whose best selves conceived the idea of Indian Pan-Hinduism, a dream now slowly rising into a possibility, as evidenced by the increasing solidarity which exists amongst educated Hindus throughout all parts of India.

Real India a *corpus vile* for experiments.

But outside "Young India" is the true India, agricultural India, the *corpus vile* practised on alike by martinet legislators in India and the faddy philanthropists and selfish business-world of England.

That *corpus vile* is as yet stupid and uncomplaining as the proverbially patient ox. It feels when food is short or the goad is struck deep into the quick. As yet it reasons not and knows not its own strength. It is merely a little restive just now, as the goad has of late been used incessantly and has made a sore.

Educated classes.

Then as regards the educated classes, a large minority more resemble discontented foreigners domiciled in India than natives of India. Education on English lines carried out in India imparts learning of a sort without principle, makes a Bengali into a prig, a Muhammadan into a poor imitation of a vicious Englishman, an up-country Hindu into a selfish agnostic, and all who fail to make money or get Government service into grievance-mongers. An English boy starts in life with the

moral force called principle ingrown in him; an Indian student—after cramming moral text-books for years—with nothing developed in him, but self-seeking. Half the former's education is from his healthy home and school surroundings. Of those the latter can know nothing.

Sahibs preferred to countrymen.

The Indian masses instinctively grasp the fundamental difference in character between an English and native judge or executive officer. They trust the former, but distrust the latter. If a peasant is asked why he prefers that a matter of vital importance to himself should be made over for arbitrament to a young inexperienced English civilian, rather than to some clever old native officer, he would say, "All you Sahibs make mistakes, but you mean well, you try your best to do justice (*insâf*), but all black men" (*kâle âdmi*)—an opprobrious term Indians insist on using—"can be bought"—*i.e.*, are open to the influences of money, caste, or creed. There are, of course, noble exceptions to the general rule, who are honoured by Sahibs and peasantry alike.

Over-government an admitted fact and evil.

Our most experienced officers—including our late Viceroy after four years' tenure of his high office—all agree that we over-govern India, and that over-government is a mistake which *pro tanto* diminishes our popularity. The evil is generally spoken of by Englishmen with regretful resignation, as if it were a law of nature like death, to which all must submit. We in India try to persuade ourselves that this Frankenstein, which we are creating there, is

the consequence of the miserable exigencies of party government in England. We assert that to save or gain a few votes weak Ministries, yielding to the clamour of ignorant philanthropists or to the mercantile selfishness of some threatened interest, habitually force unsuitable measures upon India, to the detriment of her finances and the vexation of her peoples. Such a charge appears to contain only part of the truth, for the over-government of India is more due to the initiative of the Indian Government itself than to that of any Home Ministry.

To attempt to distribute the responsibility for the preventible disaffection which now exists in India is beyond the scope of this work. Some of the causes are patent enough. Of those due to the independent initiative of the Government of India we may select the systems of civil justice land revenue, and education. Let us glance at each of them in succession.

The growth of law and lawyers.

The masses are, as before mentioned, ignorant superstitious agriculturists and their dependents—certain village artisans and menials whose wage is a dole of grain at each harvest. Before the establishment of British rule land was of little value, except near towns, because the increase of population was kept down by war, pestilence, and famine, and the State or strong man of the day appropriated most of the profits of cultivation. Thus a cultivator's credit was practically limited to what he could save on a small fraction of his next harvest. Under the order and security of British rule the

people multiplied fast, land became valuable, and the State's demand being limited to a comparatively small and fixed share of the estimated annual produce, commuted into cash, the credit of an agriculturist jumped from nothing to the market value of his holding. Now the Indian *ryot* was, and still is to a large extent, in business wisdom as incapable and thoughtless as an impulsive child; hence when the peasant found he could borrow rupees easily by the mere asking, with or without a supplemental mark on a piece of paper, he naturally began to use up his credit. Domestic occurrences, particularly deaths and marriages, are occasions when custom compels expenditure, however poor a man may be; hence upon each of them, as borrowing was now easy, the *ryot* spent freely. Under the new order of things departments multiplied, each creating hitherto unknown restrictions and offences, and each served by a ubiquitous army of needy, greedy native officials, supervised by others equally rapacious, all controlled by a distant Sahib, who spent most of his energies in an office fifty or a hundred miles away, checking and preparing reports and returns, and propounding and answering departmental conundrums which "no man could understand"—so involved and confusing are the rules which grow up under a bureaucracy. As regards those conundrums, they are constantly cropping up in every branch of work, and cause an immense expenditure of brain-power. To interpret obscurities, reconcile conflicting rules or rulings, and to explain

away impracticable ones, requires time, research, and ability. Curious, is it not, that half the subtlest minds in official India are employed in tying legal knots and the other half in undoing them?

The *ryot* under many masters.

But to return to the *ryot*, who knows nothing of the difficulties of scientific government on a uniform pattern, he had formerly only one master to propitiate—his immediate superior, the village headman, who was the intermediary between village-community and the governing power of the day. Under the new order the one master had soon grown into a dozen or more, all clamorous for fees and free quarters. Thus, as each departmental machine became more and more complicated, the *ryot* found his perplexities ever increasing. When he had to defend his interests in law courts, he soon learnt there that the ablest liar comes off best, and that legal proof is so difficult that a defendant's most prudent course is to deny all knowledge of facts, and employ a pleader to quote Acts and sections and rulings to the puzzled judge; and he, if a native, would often dismiss a claim or acquit an accused person to avoid the possible consequences of an appeal or revision—to wit, the reversal of the lower Court's order on some technical point, plus a possible wigging for himself, and the occasional retardation of promotion.

A case in court.

Thus, whatever the issue, a case in court is often the beginning of an Indian's indebtedness—he borrows to defend himself, and fights the case to the end. Whether a criminal one or merely a suit on a

bond, whether he win or lose, the result is much the same, a load of debt under which he often eventually sinks and joins the increasing multitude of the expropriated and therefore discontented ex-landowners of India. In England few men ever enter a criminal court; in India so many acts and omissions are offences, so ignorant and unreceptive are the people, so unsuitable is sometimes the law, with such immunity can false charges be worked, that amongst middle-aged men a large minority have at some time been concerned in a true or suspected crime. In England litigation is more a luxury than a necessity, but in India creditors ordinarily use the courts for debt-collecting purposes as a matter of course. Thus the law enmeshes the Indian *ryot* all his life, and being technical complicated English law, it is a powerful weapon in the hands of the rich for the undoing of the poor. Being a nice and delicate weapon, experts can alone handle it with dexterity; hence the rich intrust the conduct of their cases to skilled pleaders. When one side employs a lawyer, the other in self-defence does the same. But the poor man cannot raise money enough to pay large fees. His necessity has therefore been met by the supply of inferior pleaders, who now infest the purlieus of every court throughout India, to the perversion of justice and the impoverishment of their employers.

The law and journalism are the professions outside Government service which "Young India" mostly affects. The Bar is therefore crowded by

hungry pleaders, whose touts hang about the railway stations and wrangle over the arriving rustic, who is finally carried off in triumph by one or other to the den of a competing pleader. And the rustic? Well, after a time he returns to his village a wiser, sadder, and poorer man.

System of civil justice.

That since the Mutiny from 10 to 25 per cent, according to locality, of the cultivated land of the Panjab has passed from the peasant proprietary into the hands of the money-lending classes, and that notwithstanding various palliatives and weak obstructions devised of late years to retard the progress of expropriation, the hereditary land-owning tribes—and particularly the Muhammadans—of the province are annually becoming more and more involved and losing status, is largely due to the system of civil justice in force in the province. What is going on in the Panjab is occurring all over British India.

Degradation of the peasantry.

The degradation of the agriculturists from indebtedness, and the passing of their marketable interests in their holdings to their creditors, is everywhere in progress. Outside the upper provinces the consequences may never be serious, because the people are more docile, more homogeneous than in the Panjab, and have little religious, social, or racial antagonism with their creditors. But in the Panjab at least, and particularly in its Musalman or western half, the case is very different. There the people are the descendants of strong, conquering tribes, each proud with the pride of

ancestry and traditions of past greatness. It is outside human nature to suppose that such men, should a chance of recovering their freedom present itself, will tolerate their continued enslavement by their former dependants, the nerveless money-lending Bunniah of the Panjab. Pressure from England has had nothing to do with agricultural indebtedness and peasant and landlord expropriation by money-lenders. The disease is of Anglo-Indian origin, and will, unless eradicated by drastic treatment, grow like a great cancer until it destroys the finest peasantry in India, or goads them, when opportunity occurs, into insurrection.

CHAPTER III.

LOOSENING THE BONDS OF EMPIRE.

LAND REVENUE SYSTEM—A PANJAB PEASANT'S INCOME AND EXPENDITURE — EDUCATIONAL POLICY — THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT — MILLIONAIRES CREATED — AN ABJECT PEASANTRY — PANJABI CRITICISMS—BENGAL LANDLORDS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEFENCE OF INDIA—GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS—AGITATORS—CONSEQUENCES OF PARTY STRIFE IN INDIA — LORD LANSDOWNE ON OVER-GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY INTERFERENCE—CYNICAL VIEW—SELFISHNESS OF MANUFACTURING ENGLAND — THE COTTON DUTIES — ENGLAND PUSHES INDIA TOWARDS BANKRUPTCY — THE DISGUISE OF FREE TRADE—JOHN BULL'S SENTIMENTS—THE OPIUM COMMISSION — DANGERS BEFORE US IN INDIA — FREEDOM OF THE PRESS — RUSSIA'S TRUMP-CARD — AGRARIAN DISCONTENT IN THE WESTERN DISTRICTS OF THE PANJAB.

Land revenue system.

As regards the land revenue system, it too, in its present form, is entirely of Anglo-Indian creation. Theoretically the State has always been regarded throughout India as the ultimate landlord, entitled to a share of each harvest. Practically, during the century preceding our dominion at least, when strong settled Governments were not existent, the State took all it could, without throwing much of the land out of cultivation. We so limit the Government demand as to leave half of the profits of cultivation to the landowner, and instead of taking a share of each harvest in kind, we estimate

what the Government share should be in an average year, commute that share into money, and exact it twice a-year after each harvest, irrespective of the character of the out-turn. By limiting the demand to what is called half net assets, and taking no more, land soon became a valuable property, and by giving each holder the *plenum dominium* over his holding, subject to the due payment of the land revenue, and cesses assessed thereon, we raised his credit from almost nothing to the full market value of a good property. By establishing fixity of demand throughout countries in which the out-turn ranges from nothing at all to a hundredfold, according to times and amount of each season's rainfall, we assumed that the peasant was, or would soon become, a thrifty man with money in hand to tide him over short harvests, instead of which he was, and still is, from a business standpoint, a poor improvident weakling, who should be treated as a thoughtless child and not as an experienced business man. The earth-hunger of money-lenders, who with admirable skill manipulate our system to their own advantage, has hitherto found easy satisfaction in the Panjabi *zamindar*. They lend him money at 24 to 36 per cent annual interest, become in time usufructuary mortgagees of his fields, leave him in possession as cultivating tenant for a year or two, and finally eject him from his ancestral acres. If it be remembered that the population of India —nearly 300 millions—is still mostly agricultural, increased in the decade preceding the last census by

28 millions,[1] is so dense throughout the richest tracts—some as large as England—as to number from 500 to 800 per square mile of cultivation, and that hitherto England's selfish commercial policy has prevented the reasonable development of Indian industries, the severity of the struggle for existence throughout a continent nearly every part of which suffers from frequent drought can easily be understood.

A peasant's income and taxation.

The annual grain receipts of a prosperous Panjabi peasant may average £8,[2] out of which the owner has to pay £1, 12s. as land revenue and cesses, and 3s. as the duty on salt consumed by his cattle and his household. If we assume that he pays his taxes from labour and other earnings, he has then to feed, clothe, shelter his family, and replace farm stock, on a net income of about 13s., or say 10 rupees, a-month. This suffices in average years; but as the crops are

[1] The increase is generally loosely put at 35 millions, but Kashmir with over 2½ millions, and certain other tracts, were excluded from the 1881 census. The true net addition to the total population in the decade 1881-1891 is 28 millions.

[2] The account works out as follows. The receipt side is liberal for an uninvolved peasant proprietor:—

Receipts.		
Value of gross produce of eight cultivated acres at £1 an acre		£8 0 0
Earnings from working on railways, roads, &c., for three months in the year		1 5 0
Payment for milk, *ghi*, goats, hides sold, and miscellaneous services		0 10 0
		£9 15 0
Payments.		
Land revenue and cesses = one-fifth of gross produce	£1 12 0	
Duty on salt consumed by family and cattle	0 3 0	
Deduct taxes		1 15 0
Net income in an average year		£8 0 0

frequently short, and cattle will die, borrowing is often necessary. A bumper harvest coupled with high prices may enable the Indian peasant to throw off his burden for a time, but rarely does so, for interest doubles a debt in three years, and if a peasant has money in hand he naturally spends it.

The Permanent Settlement.

In contrast with the case of the peasant owners of the Panjab, was that of the village communities of Bengal. That rich province supports a peaceful and submissive population—two-thirds Hindus and one-third Muhammadans—now numbering 71 millions, or nearly twice that of the United Kingdom, and ten millions more than that of the United States. For centuries before the battle of Plassey (1757), which gave us the country, that vast inoffensive mass of humanity had been easily held in subjection by Musalman rulers, governors appointed by the Delhi Emperor during the Moghal supremacy, and latterly by independent Afghan and other adventurers. Each successive ruler farmed out the country in districts to land-revenue contractors, who made their own arrangements with the village communities. That system, with some modifications, was continued by us, until in 1793 Lord Cornwallis, a Governor-General whose ideas of rights in land were those of the English nobleman and landlord of the day, in order, as he put it, "to obtain a recognised landlord with a secure title,"[1] made, with the

[1] 'Land Systems of British India,' by B. H. Baden-Powell, vol. i. pp. 389-415. Also Hunter's 'Imperial Gazette of India,' vol. ii., article "Bengal."

reluctant assent of the Court of Directors, what is known as "the Permanent Settlement." All he did was to proclaim that the then current decennial settlement would be continued "for ever," the then farmers and others settled with being recognised as the "landlords" of their "estates." He thus, without any inquiry into titles, without any survey, without any village boundary demarcation or preparation of a record of rights, raised the chance 1793 land revenue farmers—some of whom were probably also landowners—into landlords, subject to the payment to the State, "for ever," of the haphazard assessments then temporarily in force. The aggregate demand so perpetuated was Rx. 3,469,680, equivalent then to roundly 3½ millions sterling, but now, owing to the fall in the gold value of the rupee, to about half that sum.

Creation of millionaires but debasement of the peasantry.

The rentals received by the present Behar representatives of the Cornwallis landlords amount to *more than eightyfold* the sum total of the guesses on which the Permanent Settlement was based. Thus the unfortunate term "for ever," and the sacredness with which we in India regard any engagement, no matter how infatuated, when made by authority, have diverted an annual revenue of ten or more millions "conventional" sterling from the coffers of the State into the pockets of landlords, mostly of our own creation. The victims of the mistake are not alone the Government, but the people of India as well, as these latter are taxed higher than would otherwise be necessary, in order

to compensate the Government for the potential revenue lost through the nominal taxation of Bengal. The wretched peasantry, the fruits of whose labour are enjoyed by their millionaire "landlords," are the greatest sufferers of all from a measure partly intended for their benefit. By granting a perpetual farm of the province to the revenue farmers of the day "and their heirs and lawful successors . . . for ever," the rights of village communities, of peasant owners and hereditary tenants, were all ignored. Up to date neither cadastral survey nor record of rights has been made, in consequence of which *laches* on our part the so-called "landlords" have for a hundred years abused their privileges, rack-rented the cultivators, and done their best to obliterate communal and individual rights. As the Minute of the Government of Bengal, published in the official 'Calcutta Gazette' on October 25, 1893, puts it—the "illegal enhancements of rents" and "destruction of *ryot* rights have reduced the *ryots* of Behar to an extreme state of poverty and depression." A cadastral survey and record of rights—most of the latter doubtless long since extinguished through our neglect of duty—are now about to be made for Behar. Our tardy attempt at atonement to the victims of the 1793 folly has excited the opposition of the landlords and their paid champions in Calcutta and London. Some of the enormous influence—legal, journalistic, and in a very small way parliamentary—which is ever at the service of

wealthy men—has been brought to bear to obstruct Government in its endeavour to save the *ryots* from continued oppression.

Panjabi criticism of the Permanent Settlement injustice.

Educated Panjabis, who have made themselves acquainted with the merits of the case, cannot comprehend how Lord Cornwallis could bind, in a purely fiscal matter at least, succeeding legislatures "for ever," and ask how a Governor-General could legally exercise a power which his master, Parliament, did not possess. They complain that Government squeezes the Panjab agriculturists in order to carry out to the letter a foolish promise made a century ago, in a moment of mental aberration, under a total misapprehension of facts. They point out that the interests of the manly fighting races of the Panjab, upon whose attitude the stability of the English dominion in India will some day largely depend, have been sacrificed to those of a set of effeminate drones, who contribute neither money nor men to the defence of the empire, although, did Russia supplant Great Britain in India, her first act would be to enhance the revenue demand in Bengal from 3½ to 10 or more millions "conventional" sterling.

Bengal "landlords" should contribute to the defence of the empire.

There is common-sense and justice in those Panjabi views. If the Permanent Settlement cannot be set aside on the ground that it was *ultra vires*, or because of breach of obligations to the *ryots* on the part of the "landlords," surely, when the rest of India is contributing to the increased military expenditure necessitated by the proximity of Russia to

our North-Western frontier, Bengal landlords should be required to pay something for their own protection? Surely, by amendment of the Income Tax Act, so as to include otherwise untaxed unearned incremental incomes from land, or by a special "Bengal Landlords Protection Act," legal means can be devised for compelling those "landlords" to bear a fair share of the new burdens, with reference to the value of their stake in the continuance of the British dominion in India?

Educational policy.

In our educational policy, as it is to-day, there is less to criticise. Elementary subjects are taught at the expense of the State, and a village school is within walking distance of almost every boy throughout British India. The funds are of course largely provided from taxation, and in some provinces, as in the Panjab, from a special cess levied on agriculturists. Higher education is now for the most part left to the care of municipalities, district boards, and the benevolence of private societies and individuals. Those schools which adopt the Government curriculum and submit to periodical inspection and examination, receive grants in aid on the payment-by-result principle. A civilised democratic Government like ours would have failed in its duty had it not done all in reason to educate the youth of India. Unfortunately it has been the townsfolk in general—especially trading Hindus and the writer or *munshi* class—and not the agriculturists, who have hitherto taken advantage of what practically amounts to a free education.

Government appointments.

The product is the "Young India" of to-day, an annually growing multitude of hungry graduates of our Universities, supplemented by larger numbers of disappointed failures, who have, as they describe their educational qualifications, "studied up to the B.A. standard." They all clamour for Government appointments carrying emoluments equal to their aspirations, but in their hunger accept any pensionary posts with salaries as low as 10s. or 15s. a-month. Naturally such men make indifferent officials, and increase their incomes in many unauthorised ways. In fact, their salaries are such a pittance, compared with their expectations and scholastic attainments, that numbers of them live to some extent on what the law regards as "illegal gratification," but native public opinion as the reasonable spoils or perquisites of Government employment. Those who are not satisfied with a clerical life on small pay and large opportunities, and yet fail to obtain any of the few prizes awarded with or without preliminary nomination by competitive examination, swell the already overcrowded Bar, work as petition-writers, lawyers' touts, news-writers, clerks in mercantile concerns, &c., and struggle through life as best they can, soured and disappointed maligners of the Government, which educated without salarying them.

Agitators.

Such men form the rank and file of the political and pseudo-religious associations—*e.g.*, Congress and Kine-protection societies, now common throughout India. Extremists amongst them are a kind of

impotent proletariat, whose peculiar mission it is to incite class against class, Hindus against Muhammadans, and both against their British masters. The connection of all centres by rail, the rapidity, cheapness, and safety of postal communications, the freedom of the press, increasing congestion and poverty, the object-lesson in ignoble strife daily afforded by a perusal of political speeches in and out of Parliament, and the comments of the party press of London on them, combine to familiarise educated India with our failings, and to teach her collegiate youth the art of agitation. Although one result of the spread of knowledge is to cause natives to doubt England's moral greatness and purity of purpose, the same enlightening also brings home to the more thoughtful of them England's power and India's weakness, and convinces their best selves that independence being impracticable, within a measurable space of time at least, the regulated freedom enjoyed by all classes under our easy sway is greater liberty than would be tolerated under the rule of any other European Power.

Whether the net result of our educational policy will eventually strengthen or weaken our hold upon India is a question on which there is much difference of opinion. So far, education has distinctly failed to promote a feeling of loyalty to the Queen-Empress and her Viceroy in India.

Consequence of party strife on India.

Under our English system of party government, the ever-present temptation to interfere in Indian affairs is peculiarly potent, whenever the party in

power is weak, either from the smallness of its majority or the uncertain allegiance of its various groups of supporters. In such a case the interests of India are sometimes lightly sacrificed to conciliate small groups of irresponsible M.P.'s, or rather some influential body amongst their constituents.

Lord Lansdowne's farewell speech.

In January last (1894) our late Viceroy, just before laying down office, endeavoured to convey a warning to England of the danger of subordinating Indian interests to those of party at Westminster. The carefully weighed language of that farewell appeal to the true patriotism of his countrymen should bring home to every Englishman that, whether he personally has interests in India or not, he, as one of the governing race, exercising the franchise, shares the responsibility for every hasty or unwise resolution on Indian affairs in the House of Commons.

Lord Lansdowne said :—

Ignorant interference of parliamentary groups in Indian affairs.

Another danger, again, and I am not sure that it is not the greatest of all, seems to me to lie in the tendency to transfer power from the Government of India to the British Parliament. I admit that in a country of democratic institutions, Parliament must be the ultimate source and depository of power. In an extreme case there is no act of the executive, British or Indian, which can be removed beyond its control. The Viceroy and Secretary of State have alike to reckon with it, and there is no escape from its authority. It does not, however, follow that because these powers are inherent in Parliament they should be perpetually exercised by it; and it is the modern tendency to exercise those powers continually, and at the instance of irresponsible persons, which in my belief constitutes a grave menace to

the safety of the empire. I suppose all students of political science will admit that the tendency of the Legislature to usurp the functions of the Executive Government is one of the most dangerous tendencies of the present age. It is specially dangerous when the subject of those usurpations is the Government of such a dependency of the Crown as the Indian empire, and when the policy of a body, which is admittedly a body of experts, is liable at any moment to be thwarted and set aside by another body which must, in the nature of things, be deficient in expert knowledge, and which, in recent years, has shown a constantly increasing tendency to be swayed by emotion and enthusiasm. The risk is all the greater, because, while the machinery of the Indian Government grinds slowly and laboriously, the parliamentary machine is excessively rapid in action. . . . In the House of Commons an erratic member in a thin House may carry, over the heads of the Secretary of State and of the Government of India, a resolution vitally affecting the welfare of this country, as summarily and as light-heartedly as if the proceedings were those of the debating club of a college rather than the senate of a great empire. In a couple of hours the work of years may be undone, and so it may come to pass that, while we are slowly and laboriously striving to obtain an equilibrium between income and expenditure, or endeavouring to improve the condition of our Indian service, some haphazard decision of our masters on the other side threatens our finances with bankruptcy, or capsizes our most carefully considered schemes for improving the efficiency of the public services. The wrong thing is done, and it is done in a manner that cannot fail to impair the authority of a Government which can carry on its work only if its authority is upheld. . . ."

Cynical view of parliamentary control.

A cynic might plead in extenuation of the apparent selfishness and levity with which Parliament treats Indian subjects, that, being a conquered continent, whenever her interests conflict with those of

her conqueror, the latter must prevail, and that as neither constituencies nor their representatives have more than the vaguest knowledge of India, her affairs necessarily bore both the House and the nation. All this is true enough, and accounts for the free hand given to Ministers to dispose of Indian subjects as may best suit English party interests.

Ignorance and selfishness of England in Indian affairs.

England, generally, does not know the truth. Her sense of justice would be hurt were she to hear it. As examples of her treatment of India, let us take the recent action of the present Ministry upon the two burning subjects of the hour—the refusal of the Cabinet to permit the reimposition of cotton duties, and the despatch of an Opium Commission to India. The former, indeed the whole history of the cotton duties, exemplifies the subordination of India's commercial interests to those of England, the latter her misguided philanthropy. Other examples might easily be given: for instance, the snatch resolution upon "simultaneous examinations"; the forcing of unsuitable factory legislation under the guise of benevolence, but really in the interests of Manchester; and the Ministerial surrender to the "purity" party on the Contagious Diseases legislation and rules.

However, the two first-mentioned cases are the most useful for our purpose, because they are very recent, still unsettled, and, until decided in the only way compatible with honour, are injuring England's reputation for honesty, and *pro tanto* lowering her prestige throughout India.

Taking the case of the cotton duties first, we find that England's unfair treatment of her dependency dates back from 1700. In that year, and again twenty years later, Acts were passed penalising the import of Indian calicoes into England, and even prohibiting "the use or wear in Great Britain in any garment or apparel" of any Indian calico. The protection continued until, towards the end of the century, the introduction of steam-power mills began to enable England to undersell her rival in her own markets. Indian hand-looms could not compete with English steam-power mills. The right to protect her own industries was denied to India, and consequently, during the next fifty years some ten millions of weavers and their families were deprived of their hereditary calling and reduced to want, whilst Manchester grew rich on their sufferings. Case of cotton duties.

By degrees India learnt the virtue of self-help, and started cotton-mills for herself. Her weaving population grew hopeful again, and a bright industrial future was opening for her, when England once more interfered in the interests of the Lancashire cotton-spinners and operatives. At that time a large part of the Imperial revenues of India was derived from import duties. Those on cotton goods, although levied at the same rate as on other imports, brought as much money into the Exchequer as the aggregate on the thirty or more articles included in the tariff. As soon as the establishment of cotton-mills in India began to threaten the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by England, the Government of

India was instructed to gradually abolish the cotton duties. That order was carried out between 1875 and 1882. Cotton goods were first admitted at specially favourable rates, then the duty was reduced from 7½ per cent to 5 and 3½ per cent, and finally taken off altogether.

England's policy beneficial for Lancashire.

From a selfish standpoint England's policy was justified by the result. The expansion of her dependency's young industry was effectually checked, and that dependency's finances were thrown into disorder. Between 1876-77 and 1880-91, India paid her way by borrowing. In those five years her deficit was 100 millions of rupees. The gold value of the rupee had already begun to fall ominously, and the amount of India's annual "tribute" to England to rise correspondingly, and yet, notwithstanding the gloomy prospects before her, India was compelled in 1882 to surrender her cotton duties to the greed of her master in England.

England pushes India towards insolvency.

As was foreseen, the continued decline of the rupee has brought India this year (1894-95) within a measurable distance of bankruptcy, has compelled England to permit her to close her mints against silver and to reimpose import duties—except on cotton goods. As they, however, represent over 40 per cent of the whole sea-borne merchandise imported into India; as the duty on them, being the most indispensable for revenue purposes, was the last taken off; and as the reimposition of a 5 per cent *ad valorem* duty would go far to wipe out the deficit which cannot otherwise be provided for,—it

follows that the order to exclude cotton from the tariff is an injustice to India. To meet the deficit caused by that exclusion she has had to borrow gold in England, thereby augmenting India's "tribute" to England—in other words, home gold payments, which already amount to 18 millions sterling or nearly one-third of the whole Imperial revenues of India.

Now all India, official and non-official, European and Native, as well as the Secretary of State's Council in London, were in accord that the re-imposition of moderate cotton duties was a necessity of the situation, without which the re-establishment of a financial equilibrium was hopeless; and further, that the taxation of numerous comparatively insignificant articles, and exemption of cotton, was vexatious and unjust. Notwithstanding such a consensus of opinion, the Secretary of State for India was ordered by the Cabinet to disregard all considerations outside the Lancashire vote, and so cotton goods find no place in the Indian Tariff Act, 1894.

The interests of 300 millions of Asiatics sacrificed to three millions in England.

This wrong to India has been done solely and entirely to appease Lancashire—that is, the interests and wishes of 300 millions of the Queen-Empress's Asiatic subjects have been deliberately sacrificed for the possible benefit of three millions of Her Majesty's English subjects. The London 'Standard' with sarcastic frankness put the reason into a sentence. "Practical politicians," it said, "are forced to consider the importance of the Lancashire vote." This one act encourages the idea that England's

vaunted purity of purpose is all moonshine when her pocket is touched; and the pity of it is, that all India is now beginning to believe that she is a subject continent ruled, when interests conflict, for the benefit of her conquerors. England, in acting as she has done, has only carried out a law of universal application in nature, "Thou shalt want ere I want."

A selfish Act disguised under a free trade principle.

A conscientious and moral people like the English would not have tolerated such an *exposé* of the principle governing their commercial policy, as the truism just quoted implies; hence the real nature of the resolution of the House, which called upon India to abandon the cotton duties altogether, was concealed in a euphemistic paraphrase. When on April 4, 1879, the House resolved to make India suffer for the good of Lancashire, the reason given was that the retention of any cotton duty was "*unjust alike to the Indian consumer and the English producer*," and John Bull—except when a cotton-spinner—honestly believes this.

John Bull's views.

"It's enforcing free trade on India, isn't it?" he asks: "sorry we can't do the same for Australia or any of our little colonies even. It would be so much better for me—and for them too. However, India is a big place: let us keep a tight hand over her, and retain that market at least."

The Opium Commission.

Now, passing on to the Opium Commission, the other prominent scandal of the hour, due to the action of a weak Cabinet, we find that in a House of 289 members a resolution was passed after a

short discussion—in which, to his honour, Mr Gladstone, the Prime Minister, exposed the omissions and fallacies of the original motion—praying Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Opium Commission. Accordingly, Commissioners were appointed to visit India and wander at pleasure through that continent as a power independent of its Imperial and Local Governments, take evidence, and report how best effect could be given to the resolution, aiming at the prohibition of opium cultivation, were such a step financially and politically practicable, and advisable on moral grounds. Notwithstanding the presence on the Committee of two extreme anti-opiumists, whose minds were notoriously shut against all pro-opium facts, the result of the Commission—though not up to date declared—was a foregone conclusion before its members sailed for India. The Cabinet knew that the inquiry would demonstrate to all reasonable men the general innocuousness of the opium habit in India, and the impracticability of materially changing a system of opium administration which effectually raises a maximum revenue at a minimum of production. The Cabinet was also aware that in no case could India afford to surrender its six or seven millions sterling of opium revenue, and that England would never agree to compensate India for depriving her of that revenue. All this was matter of common knowledge, for the Government of India had already made exhaustive inquiries into the subject, and every globe-trotter sees for himself that those martial races the

Sikhs and Rajputs, though hereditary opium-consumers, are both long-lived and splendid specimens of humanity.

England pays half the cost of the Commission.

Notwithstanding those facts, the Home Government, to propitiate its anti-opium supporters and gain time, caused the Royal Commission to be appointed, and would have saddled its whole cost upon the proposed victim, had not all journalistic India cried "Shame! no one out here wants your useless Commission. As you have sent it, and it is a mere election move, you ought in decency to pay for it." The protest availed so far as to induce the Home Government to decide that only half the cost would be exacted from India. Even that is an injustice. The Commission sat throughout the cold weather of 1893-94, appeared to the ignorant natives to belittle the Government of India and Provincial Governments, carried consternation into tens of millions of households throughout the peninsula, roused a general suspicion that opium was to be further taxed or suppressed altogether in the interests of English distillers, and advertised the soothing properties of the drug to the races who had never used it before. As already remarked, the Commission can have no practical result beyond convincing all impartial men that the anti-opium literature so widely disseminated in England is largely inaccurate and misleading. In fact, evil can alone come of this Commission, for India will have to pay some £15,000 — that is, half its cost — her peoples will be more suspicious than before about

our intentions towards them, and the convictions of the anti-opiumists will remain unshaken, as their two representatives on the Commission are certain to disagree with their colleagues.

India wants just and wise treatment from the English nation.

Enough has been said to show the unwisdom of over-governing India by shaping all her institutions on Western models, and treating her peoples as homogeneous beings of high and equal intelligence. Enough too has, perhaps, also been said to convince impartial Englishmen that India does not always receive fair treatment at their hands, and that the subjection of her interests to those of party strife at Westminster is both discreditable to Great Britain as a nation, and a danger to the maintenance of her rule in India. Prudently and sympathetically governed, the unwarlike masses of India will continue their daily routine of life, untouched by any crisis, whilst the manlier races of Upper India will serve faithfully in our armies, in any further numbers that may be required.

Dangers before us in India.

But if we continue to degrade the cultivator from peasant owner to money-lenders' tenant or field-labourer, to excite the minds of the credulous masses by frequent interference with their customs and prejudices, to attempt to abolish their class distinctions, and to democratise the ancient institutions of their countries, the universal discontent engendered will make any change a possible relief to all whose interests or prejudices have been offended by such unwisdom. The bulwarks of India are in India, so long as the governed believe

that their interests are identical with ours; but that belief is already shaken in the minds of the educated poor generally, and of a small but appreciable percentage of the ignorant peasantry as well. Moreover, the numbers and audacity of agitators, who endeavour from a variety of motives to discredit the British administration in the eyes of the people, are annually increasing.

Freedom of the press abused.

The Indian Press Act passed in 1878, with the approval of a Conservative Ministry, by Lord Lytton's Government, to enable that Government to exercise some mild control over the dissemination of seditious literature, was repealed a few years later during Lord Ripon's administration, under orders from the Radical party, who had succeeded to power at home. Since then vernacular journalism, with some honourable exceptions, has rioted in its freedom, and persistently misrepresents the acts and motives of Government and its British officers. Little of the poison has as yet been absorbed into the body politic, but the constant drip hollows the stone, and eventually, as education spreads and penetrates throughout rural India, and population and impoverishment increase, the virus must operate.

The Government of India on democratic lines impossible.

India, then, governed like democratic Great Britain—except when Indian interests clash with those of India's masters — on the one-man one-value principle, would be wholly discontented and intolerant of British supremacy. The land might still be fully cultivated, the export trade immense,

and prosperity statistically satisfactory, but the profits would mostly be enjoyed by the banking and trading classes of the towns; the people, the actual producers, would be their servants. The cultivators, *quasi*-serfs now of their former dependants, would be sullenly submissive in their degradation, and ready for any change which might bring them emancipation.

Russia's trump-card.

At such a time, were Russia in a position to seriously threaten or attempt an advance to the Indus, she might play a trump-card and win the first trick at least in the game, if not the game itself, by causing a belief to take root in the minds of the people that she was coming as their deliverer from the toils of the money-lender and his patron and protector, the English Government. If it be remembered that the Musalman peasantry of the Panjab, to the number of four millions, are chiefly congregated in the western districts between the Chenab and Afghanistan, are probably, except in some Trans-Indus tracts, more indebted and expropriated than any of the agricultural races in India, and have, in their own opinion at least, small reason to be satisfied with our rule,—the unsettling effect upon their minds of the near approach of a "liberator" will be realised. Russia is believed—for exact information is difficult to obtain—to lay a far lighter hand upon the Musalman landowners of her Central Asian governments than we do upon our Indian peasantry. Observers tell us that broadly she takes one-tenth, we one-fifth, of the

produce: in collection she allows full elasticity to meet the fluctuations of each season; we fix the annual demand for twenty years, and exact it rigidly in good and bad years alike, granting suspensions and remissions very sparingly: she leaves questions about the transfer of interests in land to be determined by the people themselves, in accord with their ancient customs; we establish freedom of contract, and the complex law and procedure of Western Europe. The result is, that under Russian rule agriculturists remain owners of their holdings, but under ours are falling to the position of tenants and field-labourers.

Special danger from agrarian discontent in the Western Panjab districts.

There can be no doubt that agrarian discontent, owing to our hard and unsympathetic systems of civil justice and land revenue administration, will cause us grave embarrassment should Russia succeed in getting nearer to India, and that it is unfortunate that the peasantry who will be earliest disturbed by the proximity of Russia will be those Muhammadan tribes who have most reason to be aggrieved with their status in the body politic. These facts, coupled with the increasing solidarity of the vast Hindu population of India, numbering 208 millions, and the undoubted growth of the Pan-Hindu movement already referred to, should warn us, a handful of foreign sojourners governing a populous continent, that, if we neglect the interests of the 57 millions of Indian Muhammadans, we neglect our own.

CHAPTER IV.

EVOLUTION AND EFFECTS OF TZARDOM.

STATUS OF INDIAN AND RUSSIAN PEOPLES CONTRASTED — RUSSIAN LANDSCAPE — AREA AND POPULATION — RIVERS — MOUNTAINS — SEASONS — THE *MUZHIK* — NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION — GREAT RUSSIANS — MIGRATORY HABITS — TARTAR DOMINION — ITS EFFECTS — RISE OF AUTOCRATIC FORM OF RULE — THE FIRST TZAR OF RUSSIA — ENSLAVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE — POWER OF THE NOBILITY — STATE OF RUSSIA IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY — PETER THE GREAT — RUSSIA'S TCHINOVNIKS AND INDIA'S OFFICIAL CLASSES COMPARED — COMPENSATION ALLOWANCES — DISABILITIES OF ENGLISH OFFICIALS — RULERS AND RULED IN RUSSIA — PETER'S REFORMS — FEELING AGAINST GERMANS — FRENCH REVOLUTION — THE USES OF THE MASSES — THE INVASION OF INDIA PROJECTED — RUSSOPHOBIA — EFFECT OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS.

Indian and Russian peoples contrasted.

THE kind of over-government which is unsettling the conservative habit of the native mind is honourable to the good intentions of the masters of India. Forgetful of the slow evolution of their own institutions, they are in too great a hurry to force the same blessings on their dependency; that is all. In Russia things are done differently. There the Government, fearing the people, deliberately keeps them abject and ignorant. Thus, whilst the Indian peoples participate in all the rights and privileges of citizenship in the greatest democratic empire in the world, the *muzhiks* of Russia are nearly as

stagnant and brutish as they were five hundred years ago, before their princes had thrown off the Tartar yoke. Let us look into their history a little, and see how it is that whilst most of the world is progressing towards light, Russia is still sunk in medieval darkness, a sort of China in Europe.

Russian landscape.

There is nothing beautiful, nothing joyous, in Russia. As the land is, so are its people—uninteresting, monotonous, undeveloped. Flat immensity, unchanging uniformity, characterise the landscape, whether in the silent forests and frozen morasses of the north, or in the treeless expanses of the rest of that dreary empire.

Area and population.

Russia is a vast plain occupying one-sixth of the land-surface of the globe. The population is now about 120 millions. India, with less than a fifth of her rival's area, supports nearly 300 millions.[1]

Areas and populations of the United Kingdom, Russia, and India compared.

[1] The following figures, mostly taken from 'The Statesman's Year-Book,' 1893, give some details :—

Country.	Territory.	Area in thousands of sq. miles.	Population in millions.	Density per sq. mile.
United Kingdom	Great Britain and Ireland .	121	38	314
Indian Empire	British (including Burma) .	965	221	229
	Native States . . .	595	66	111
Total	Indian Empire, 1891 . .	1560	287	184
Russia in Europe	European Provinces . .	1902	87	46
	Poland	49	9	170
	Finland	144	2	16
Total	Russia in Europe in 1887 .	2095	98	46
Russia in Asia	Caucasus	182	8	40
	Kirghiz Steppes . . .	756	2	2
	Trans-Caspiana with Caspian	384	.3	.3
	Turkestan	409	3	8
	Siberia	4833	5	.9
Total	Russia in Asia in 1889-91 .	6564	18	3
Grand	total of Russian Empire .	8659	116	13

Allowing for yearly increase, the total population of Russia must now (1894) be about 120 millions, and of India 300 millions.

The northern half of Russia is almost uninhabitable from the cold. It is an unreclaimed region of sombre forests, of vast lakes and marshes, icebound for most of the year. Immediately southwards the forests yield dominion to a corn country, the limitless central plains known as the Black Land, which has been from the time of Herodotus downwards a granary for Eastern Europe. Still farther south the Black Land merges into the Steppes, a prairie-like pasture region, now largely subdued to the plough. Eastwards of that reclaimed region are barren wastes—unproductive steppes—frequented only by nomads and their scanty cattle.

Like the land, so are its rivers—vast, dull, uninteresting. Schoolboys are familiar with several: the Dnieper, the Don, the Amoor, and, greatest of all, the Volga, the "Mother Volga" of Russian song. Until the railway partially deposed them, they were the "roads that run" of the country. Being frozen over for from three to six months every year according to latitude, and being navigable in spring and summer, locomotion was by sledge in winter, and by boats when possible. In spring people stayed at home, because the universal thaw and spread of water changed the face of the land into a sea of mud and slush. Of roads, as we know them, there were none and are none. In this respect Russia is not much worse off than the United States, where railroads are splendid but carriage-roads mere tracks. Russia has no stones, a thin population, and a government for the classes

Rivers.

only; hence roads are all simply unmetalled tracks, and untraversable in spring. The rivers sufficed in old days, when the thawed earth forbade the use of sledges. The rivers that in sluggish volume move silently to their seas, find there no emancipation for their freights.

No perennially open sea.

Those seas are either icebound, like the Baltic or White Sea, for half the year, or merely lakes like the Caspian, or, like the Black Sea, a *quasi*-lake with its narrows sentinelled by other Powers, jealous of Russia's further expansion. At Vladivostok even, on the Pacific, Russia fails to touch a perennially open sea, for there too in winter the bay is frozen over. Vladivostok is many thousands of miles from St Petersburg, and behind it lies Siberia, a great lone land with a population of under one to the square mile. Vladivostok has a future before it when the Siberian railway, now in progress, shall be completed; but that future can never be a potent factor in shaping the destiny of Russia in Europe.

Mountains.

As with Russia's seas and rivers, so with her mountains—they are immense, but as yet of no great value to her. Except the Ural range, which separates Russia in Europe from Siberia, all her mountains lie at or near her extremities. None gives birth to a great river. None even influences the climate. The Urals, though the longest mountain system in Europe, run north and south, and their highest peaks range only from 4000 to 5000 feet above sea-level.

Being an uninterrupted treeless plain, Russia has only two seasons—a long severe winter and a hot summer, with a short interregnum of glorious spring. Like all similar regions—*e.g.*, Central Asia or Australia—Russia suffers from repeated droughts, so much so that famine or scarcity is rarely absent from some tract or tracts as large as Great Britain. The rainfall—much of it in the form of snow—is light and capricious, averaging 14 inches in the east and 22 inches in the west. Seasons.

This vast winter-land, with its monotonous mid-ocean horizon of never-changing flatness, has helped to stamp its inhabitants with its peculiar characteristics—an insurmountable passivity, a melancholy indifference. In India we ascribe the apathetic inertia of the latter-day Muhammadans to the fatalism of their creed; but in Russia it is not so. The *muzhik* is by courtesy a Christian, but in reality an idolater, a worshipper of *icons*, a creature of rites and ceremonies. His creed fetters his mind, and tends to keep him the slave of superstition. But it is rather the patriarchal and selfish system of government under which he exists, and the dulness of nature, which make him the listless, shiftless drudge he is. This is true of the *muzhik*—the Slav peasant of Great Russia—but does not apply to some of the races which make up the 120 million inhabitants of the empire. But the *muzhik* is the typical Russian. So long as he continues passive, toiling and moiling like the ass or the ox for the good of his master, indifferent to life, in- The *muzhik*.

different to death, so long will Russia continue a semi-barbarous Power, great only from her numbers, her vastness, and her invulnerability. Just as in India, so in Russia, the people, the masses, are agriculturists. Dwellers in towns and cities are few; industries are few.

Numbers and distribution of Slav and other races.

At present Russia in Europe has a population of nearly 100 millions, of whom about three-fourths are Slavs. These Slavs are generally divided into Great Russians and cognate tribes, assimilated or Russianised Tartars and Finns (45 millions), with Moscow as their centre; Little Russians, 16 millions, to the south, the inhabitants of rich and productive plains; and White Russians, 5 millions, to the west. These White Russians are the Irish of Russia, though neither so troublesome, so self-assertive, nor so gifted. Their country is unproductive marsh or peat-bog and clay. For centuries they have been abject under the exactions of harsh Polish and Russian landlords, frequently absentees. They are the poorest and most poverty-stricken people of the empire. The Poles, too, to whom may be added Letts and Lithuanians, though Roman Catholics, may be classed as Slavs, and number about 9 millions. Thus there are roundly 75 million Slavs in Russia in Europe, to whom may be added 5 millions more scattered throughout Siberia and Caucasia, and sprinkled over Turkestan and Trans-Caspiana. Besides the so-called Slavs, the empire contains some 40 millions of other races—viz., a million of German colonists, the best peasantry in the empire; over

2½ millions of un-Russianised Finns in the Baltic provinces; 1½ million of Iranians, mostly in Caucasia; 3½ millions of Jews in West Russia and Poland; 10 or 12 millions of Turko-Tartars, remnants of the hordes who once held Russia subject for two hundred years, now settled in the south and south-west of Russia, also in Caucasia and Siberia. All these, as well as the other nationalities—some 20 millions—scattered throughout the empire, may be described as items of small account.

The Great Russians predominant.

Amongst the three great divisions of the Slavs, the Great Russians, by their superior numbers, endurance, and persistence, are the most important. They in fact dominate the empire, and are slowly, with obstinate perseverance, Russianising the non-Slav races owing obedience to the Tzar. They are expanding and colonising as their ancestors did before them. They already number three millions in Siberia, and two millions in Caucasia.

Migratory habits of Slav peasantry.

Their instincts were always migratory. Home was no more to most of them than a wooden hut in the midst of a flat expanse. Such a home and such surroundings could be found anywhere. Life was always hard and monotonous; death but a release from the burden of life. Work was never welcome, and the limitless plain invited them southwards or eastwards in search of a more kindly soil, an easier existence. Like the wanderers of old, their motto was *ubi bene ibi domus*. Their princes had a rude civilisation, called themselves Christians, and drew inspiration from the Byzantine Church. They had

towns, too, and a large part of the population was settled in fixed abodes.

Tartar dominion in Russia.

In the thirteenth century Slav expansion was suddenly checked, and even contracted. Tartar hordes began to overrun the plains of Russia. These Tartars were pagan barbarians, shepherds whose habitat was the hilly country in the north of China. They were split up into small wandering pastoral tribes, until the genius of Chenghis Khan confederated them for a time in the beginning of the thirteenth century into an ordered avalanche of men mounted on ponies, followed by their women, children, and cattle. This avalanche descended, overrunning northern China, Turkestan, Bokhara, the south of Russia, and terrifying all Christendom. Russia was divided against herself, split up into petty squabbling principalities, each ruled by its own prince. Combination was impossible. Russia was devastated. Moscow, Novgorod, Kief were destroyed. The Golden Horde, as these devastators were called, having beaten down all resistance, renounced paganism, embraced Islam, and became for a time an independent State ruled over by the Great Khan.

Effect of Tartar rule.

For two hundred years Russia continued under the Tartar yoke, but was not Tartarised. The subject races retained their own religion, laws, and institutions. All that their Tartar masters required of them was the payment of a poll-tax—money, cattle, furs, or slaves—and of a blood-tax, in the shape of a fighting contingent. There was no blend-

ing of races. The Russians were nominally Christians, the Tartars Musalmans. The former lived in their own country; the latter, shepherds still, on its confines, in the prairie-land steppes of the south. What the Tartar dominion did was to keep Russia for two hundred years (A.D. 1262-1480) as an Asiatic dependency, and to prepare her people for the establishment of the autocratic rule of the Tzars. The Russian princes were the Khans' tax-gatherers, and as such were kept strong and the people weak, the latter being sweated for the benefit of their two masters. The Khans played off one prince against the other, and favoured those who were the best and most subservient tax-gatherers. Of all the subordinate rulers, the princes of Moscow were the most useful to their Tartar masters. So long as the Tartar power was strong, each Muscovite prince in succession styled himself "the servant of the Khan," and through Tartar aid destroyed the autocracy of several neighbouring principalities. When the Khan's power began to wane, the Moscow princes threw off their allegiance, and headed the liberation movement.

Rise of autocratic form of government.

That movement dates from Ivan III. (1462-1505 A.D.), the greatest of the princes of Moscow, known to history as the liberator of Russia and consolidator of her unity. Wars with the Tartars continued for a century and more after Ivan III.'s death, but in his reign the Tartars ceased to be a terror to Russia. They remained, it is true, but their empire was ended. They became split up into insignificant

Khanates on the confines of what was then known as Russia and along the banks of the Volga. By arresting the political development of the people and enhancing the power of their princes, the Tartar dominion enslaved the peasantry. It had little or no influence over their modes of life and habits. What they had been before their conquest by the Tartars, they were when that dominion had ended. Their religion and their customs had been drawn from Constantinople — their Tzargrad. Neither village communism under a despotic ruler, domestic slavery, nor the seclusion of women, are peculiar to Asiatic States. Communism was everywhere a necessity in primitive society; despotism a mere phase in social evolution; domestic slavery and the seclusion of women were institutions long before the Hegira. The famous epigram, "*Grattez le Russe et vous trouverez le Tartare*," is still applicable. Under a veneer of Western civilisation the Russians are still barbarians. They are to-day an instance of arrested development, largely traceable to the blight of the Tartar yoke. How else can we explain the submissive helplessness of a great people under the capricious will of a succession of autocrats? How else explain the spiritless ignorance of the sacred right of rebellion, despite the cruelties, wholesale massacres, or selfish ordinances of Tzars like Ivan the Terrible?

The first Tzar of Russia.

That tyrant (1533-84) was the grandson of Ivan III. and first Tzar of Russia. He carried on the work of his grandfather, conquered Kazan and Astrakhan, warred successfully against Poles, Tartars,

and Swedes, and crushed and decimated his *Boyars* or nobility. His rule was that of an absolute autocrat. The complete enslavement of the peasantry dates from his reign.

Enslavement of the people.

In the thirteenth century the *muzhik* was comparatively a freeman. His instincts were migratory. He founded communes in the vast expanses of Eastern Russia, and Cossack settlements in the south. The Tartar domination confined him to fixed localities, otherwise the taxes could not have been collected. The same selfishness compelled Tzars and nobles to chain him to the soil. He was reduced to serfdom — *adscriptus glebæ* — like the villeins of England in Norman times. In the seventeenth century his chains were riveted tighter, and proprietors were empowered by imperial ukases to sell their serfs independently of land.

Power of the nobility.

The century which followed the strong rule of Ivan the Terrible saw the Russian nobility all-powerful in an empire which their struggles and rivalries were weakening almost to dismemberment. The climax of absurdity was reached when all State offices were monopolised by them, with the condition attached that no noble could accept a post inferior to any ever held by an ancestor or then occupied by a brother noble who counted fewer ancestors in the 'Book of Pedigree'—the Debrett of the period—than himself. Could pride of ancestry be more childish?

State of Russia in end of

Russia then, at the time when Peter the Great, her future Regenerator, was in the nursery, re-

seventeenth century.

sembled what the French historian Rambaud dubs it, a European China,—the masses Christians in name, but Pagans in fact, mere spiritless slaves; the classes, a few thousands in all, licensed oppressors squabbling over the precedence of their respective ancestors; and both masses and classes ignorant and uncultured clowns, sunk in debauchery and drunkenness.

Peter the Great.

Every schoolboy knows how Peter the Great worked as a shipwright at Deptford, married Catharine, a servant girl, and crushed "Sweden's madman" Charles XII., and Mazeppa, the "Ukraine's hetman calm and bold," at Pultowa (1709). That victory brought home to Russia's old rivals and whilom conquerors, Sweden, Poland, and even Turkey, their own eclipse and the rise of Russia from the position of a barbarous semi-Asiatic State into that of a first class European Power. To achieve Pultowa, Peter the Great had been for nearly twenty years knouting his subjects from swine into men, forcing Western civilisation on his nobles, conscription and military discipline on his people, and exacting abject obedience to his own will from all. And yet the nation was still inert. They could stand much from their own Tzars when those Tzars were capable rulers. Neither Church nor nobility favoured innovations. Reforms would weaken their authority and reduce their incomes. Enlightenment meant progress and the growth of individual independence. So Church, nobility, and *fellaheen* peasantry acquiesced with passive

obedience in their Tzar's schemes for their improvement. Though the rank of Patriarch was abolished, it was only in abeyance. Though the nobles had to work and serve, their master was their own Tzar, the god-like Peter, a strong and capable ruler; but they detested the energetic foreigners, Scotch, English, and Dutch, with whom he had surrounded himself. Though Pultowa had given the Tzar that "window into the west" which he called St Petersburg, Moscow was still the heart of Russia, the centre of the power of nobles and ecclesiastics. Peter made war against all abuses—excepting that of autocratic rule itself. The nobility of service was the only nobility he tolerated. Hereditary rank was nothing to him. None but officials had any recognised position. All offices, civil and military, were classified into fourteen grades or orders, to each of which a particular title was attached. The system then inaugurated obtains to this day. A Russian's social status depends not on his wealth or inherited titles, but on his *Tchin* or official rank.

Comparison between Russia's Tchinovniks and India's official classes.

What Government officials are in India, the Tchinovniks or men with "*Tchins*" are in Russia. Outsiders have no position in either empire. The systems of government in both are analogous. Our Viceroy is a very limited Tzar, who, with the advice of his Council and heads of departments, directs the complex and too centralised administration of the empire in all its branches. The governing machine is a vast army of graduated officials, who are the Tchinovniks of India. In

Russia they ask, "What is your Tchin?"—in India, "What is your pay?"—and according as the answer is, does the rest of the world treat you with honour or indifference. In Russia the Tchin titles are all imposing. A Government clerk or postmaster may be a "Councillor of the State," and be also entitled to be addressed as "Excellency" or "Your Honour." In India our official titles consist of the terms which convey in the simplest and shortest language the meaning attached to the office held. With us "Commissioner," "Resident," "Agent," are all titles of high offices, each drawing, in ante-depreciation days, a salary equivalent to from £3600 to £6000 a-year. The fall in the gold value of the rupee since 1870 amounts to a reduction of about 40 per cent in all salaries. The depreciation was beginning to have a lowering effect—happily arrested by the grant of "compensation allowances"[1]—on the tone of the services. The line of cleavage between Anglo-Indian and Russian Tchinovniks is sharp and clearly defined. The former are the product of seven hundred years of free institutions and the representatives of the

Compensation allowances.

[1] The rupee used to be the equivalent of two shillings, but is now worth about one shilling and one penny, and may yet fall lower. As a consequence Government service in India was ceasing to be attractive to English gentlemen, and those already serving were deteriorating. To counteract such evils and meet to some extent the reasonable grievances of its English officers, the Government of India gave them in 1893 "compensation allowances"—*i.e.*, half the salary of each English official whose domicile was not India, up to a maximum of £1000, was to be drawn at a fixed conversion rate of one shilling and sixpence to the rupee, irrespective of the market rate.

highest intellectual and physical training which England can produce. The latter are the hereditary governing class in a nation whose civilisation and general enlightenment are still hardly superior to that of Europe in feudal times. In India the British official is still upright, capable, and strictly just. His education and training have been long, expensive, and careful; his inherited instincts and the rules of his service [1] are such that he is above influences; his pay still suffices to keep him, as a rule, unless his family is large, above temptation; his pension rates are on the whole liberal. In Russia the old law of service still obtains: "Thou shalt live upon thine office and satisfy thyself;" salaries are small, preparatory education and training indifferent, corruption almost universal.

Rulers and ruled in Russia and India.

In India rule is now impersonal; the aim is impartial justice and the good government and elevation of all sections of the community. In Russia rule is personal, and from great to petty official the one idea is to squeeze the masses and to keep them ignorant of higher aspirations, and therefore powerless. In India the object of the Government is the good of the many; in Russia of the few. In neither empire does public opinion, except of a manufactured

Disabilities of English officials.

[1] English officers holding civil appointments under Government cannot acquire interests in land in the province in which they serve, or engage in any business, or borrow money from a native, or sell to or buy from a native otherwise than at an auction or in ordinary dealings with a tradesman. With the written permission previously obtained of his superior, an officer is sometimes enabled to buy from or sell to natives other than traders. Permission is usually given in horse transactions when the price is considered reasonable.

kind, yet find expression. The masses live in scattered villages and homesteads, the educated few in towns. Mutual ignorance, indifference, and opposing interests separate the two.

Peter's reforms.

But to return to Peter and his forcing-house treatment of his people. His governmental machine worked indifferently; its materials were bad, its parts ill-fitting. He was a young giant in a hurry. He found his people in an old-world sleep, and sought to awaken and modernise them by knout and edict in a few years. Though he largely failed in his impossible task, he yet accomplished more in a short life—for he died at fifty-three—than any other sovereign has done before or since. He found Russia a semi-Asiatic State, but left her a first class European Power. He found her shut out from all seas but the Arctic Ocean. He gave her access to the Baltic and the Caspian. He even advanced his frontiers to the Black Sea for a time, but his crusade against Turkey in 1709 ended in disaster, and the loss of all his earlier conquests in that direction. Of all his social reforms, the greatest was the abolition of the *purdah* system for Russian ladies. He dragged them out of their seclusion, made them mix with men in *salons* and assemblies, made both dress like courtiers, take part in Polish and German dances, pay some regard to ablutions, and yet left them to drink like Russians. No function ended without a carouse and general intoxication. Beer and brandy accelerated Peter's own death. Our *fin de siècle* morality need not be shocked at such ex-

cesses, for up to later times our forefathers were as strong topers as the Russians, less bestial perhaps, but every one of them often "drunk as a lord."

Popular feeling against German influence.

Peter's widow, Catharine I., a Livonian peasant's daughter taken captive in war, succeeded, and for two years bravely carried on the late Tzar's reforms and innovations. Her death (1727) brought hope to all old-school Russians—hope and little more at first, for Russia moves slowly. Resentment at the exasperating superiority and restless energy of their German mentors, who had supplanted Peter's Dutch and English favourites, had not yet grown into active hatred. And so for a time the German or reform party continued dominant and domineering. Their intolerance of the most respected abuses was peculiarly offensive to a people whose government had been for centuries one long abuse. To be dragged upwards by compatriots might be forgiven, but to be bullied into civilised ways by unsympathetic Germans was a sin against the nation. The cry of "Russia for the Russians" went through the land. A palace revolution ensued. The weak Tzar was deposed and replaced by Elizabeth (1741-62), a daughter of Peter the Great. Emancipated from the heavy weight of their German enthralment, Empress and nobility found light and leading in the brighter civilisation of France.

Effect of French Revolution on the Court.

The reaction against German influence culminated in an anti-German Franco-Russian alliance. Under Catharine II. (1762-96) admiration for all that was of France continued until the Revolutionary tempest

in that country brought Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and the *ancienne noblesse* of the land to the scaffold, and topsy-turvied all the old monarchical institutions. Russian Empress and courtiers had then a rude awakening from their French cult. To them the writings of Voltaire and Diderot were no longer the inspirations of demi-gods of wisdom, but the emanations of fiends of disorder.

The Court's view of the use of the masses.

The Empress and her nobility held that the people were born and lived solely for the service of their natural rulers, whose chief duty was to keep the lower orders servile. So the landlords were made legally supreme over their serfs—an authority long before exercised in fact—and even free peasants were sold and gifted, singly and in herds, like the cattle of the fields. Nearly a million were distributed by the Empress herself amongst her favourites. Serfdom was reintroduced in Little Russia and among the Don Cossacks. Abroad, Catharine's policy was aggressive and successful. Poland was partitioned, the Crimea acquired, and Persia and Sweden forced to cede territory.

Project of 1800 for the invasion of India.

Catharine's son and successor, Paul I. (1796-1801), a whimsical and capricious tyrant, became glamoured and infatuated with the victories and seeming omnipotence of Napoleon, and planned with him an expedition for our expulsion from India. The details were worked out and the fruits of victory discounted with a disregard for commissariat and geographical considerations which foredoomed the attempt, had it been made, to disaster.

The plan of campaign was similar to that projected in 1878 by Skobeleff. In both it was assumed that India would rise against her English oppressors as soon as the deliverer should approach her frontiers. In both, hosts of mounted Cossacks were first to swarm eastwards and clear the road for the trained armies which were to follow. In both, as the avalanche of horsemen swept on towards the Indus, the free-lances of Central Asia were expected to join, incited by the prospect of unlimited loot and rapine in Hindustan. In both, those irregular horsemen were to be followed by a carefully equipped army of European troops. The combined Franco-Russian expeditionary force of 1800 was to amount to 70,000 men. They were to rendezvous at Astrabad, on the Persian shore of the Caspian, and be commanded by the French Marshal Massena. From Astrabad they were to march in forty-five days, *viâ* Herat, Farrah, and Kandahar, to "the Upper Indus."

Before committing himself to such a hazardous adventure, Napoleon asked Paul how the troops were to be fed between the Caspian and the Indus. Paul replied promptly that supplies would be locally obtainable at each stage, as the regular caravan route would be followed. And then, to show his own knowledge of Indian history and reassure Napoleon's timidity, the Tzar assured him that Nadir Shah had marched the whole distance in 1740, and "what an Asiatic army did then, we cannot doubt that an army of French and Russians can do to-day."

Skobeleff's is still a paper scheme. Paul I.'s was more, for some of the Don Cossacks actually crossed the Volga in March 1801, and Napoleon sent emissaries amongst the Indian States inviting them to rise against us. Napoleon at the time still occupied Egypt, and we were still engaged in our life-and-death struggle with the French in India; so, but for the commissariat difficulties in the 1300 miles between the Caspian and the Indus—obstacles pooh-poohed by Paul I.—the invasion for which we are still preparing might have been pushed home, and the question of Sepoy *versus* Cossack decided a century or so sooner than it is now possible. The Don Cossacks, as we have seen, actually crossed the Volga on their march to India. Before the passage was fully effected, news reached the Cossack camp that Paul I. had been assassinated, and that new political combinations in Europe were imminent.

Russophobia.

So began, so ended, the first European project for our expulsion from India by an army advancing through Afghanistan. The plan of campaign has been thought deserving of some notice, because the Russophobia which had its origin in 1800, and has never since ceased to agitate us, has since that year caused us to waste upwards of 70 millions sterling in wars with Persia and Afghanistan, and because we are still discussing the possibility of a successful invasion of India by Russia, and still anticipate that the line of attack of the future will be that decided on in 1800. We are still perturbed by every rumour of Russian movement in Central Asia. Whether it

be Khiva, Herat, the Oxus, Panjdeh, the Pamirs, or what our Indian journals call "a filibustering raid" —but the Russians euphemise as "a scientific reconnaissance"—the Russo-Indian question is always with us. It increases the taxation of our Indian fellow-subjects, starves expenditure on works of internal improvement, and diverts crores of rupees to the supposed defensive requirements of our North-Western frontier.

The effect of Napoleonic wars on Tzar and people.

With Paul I.'s assassination and the accession of his eldest son Alexander I. (1801-25) the project of a Franco-Russian invasion of India collapsed. Though a lover of peace, the young Tzar was forced to take part in the great struggle against Napoleon. Marbot's 'Memoirs' and Tolstoi's 'War and Peace,' describing from opposite sides incidents in that long struggle of the nations, have recently appeared, and made us familiar with the minds and actions of the two men in whose hands, for a period of fifteen years, the armed manhood of Europe were as helpless as sheep in a slaughter-yard.

When confusion had ended with Waterloo, and Napoleon's conquerors had reconstructed the political map of Europe, the Tzar returned to Russia, and for a time sought to ameliorate the condition of his people, so far as amelioration was compatible with a benevolent despotism. But campaigning in the West had enlightened the ignorance of the Russian people. It began to dawn upon them that to live in perpetual leading-strings, starving for the benefit of a few drones, was not the law foreordained

for all men, as the Tzar, the Church, and the landlords taught. Germans, Swiss, French, and English were, not slaves but free men, who toiled more for themselves than for others. Alexander I. believed that his people had been infected with the revolutionary contagion. His now morbid mind felt what he deemed their ingratitude to him, their benevolent Tzar. The Holy Alliance was formed, its declared object the government of Christendom on Christian principles, its real intention the mutual insurance of existing dynasties against popular movements in favour of liberal institutions.

And so the later years of Alexander I. belied the promise of the earlier part of his reign. Once more the pendulum swung backwards. All progress, all reforms were stopped, and the people were made to understand that their happiness depended on their ignorance and their blind submission to the will of their Tzar.

CHAPTER V.

AN OBJECT-LESSON IN BAD GOVERNMENT.

DESPOTISM OF NICHOLAS I.—CRIMEAN WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—ATTEMPTS AT CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS—EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS: WHY IT FAILED—HASTY REFORMS—POLITICAL SCHOOLS IN RUSSIA: NIHILISTS; PAN-SLAVISTS—RUSSO-TURKISH WAR, 1876-78—AUTOCRACY WEAKENS RUSSIA—RETURN TO DESPOTISM—ALEXANDER II. MURDERED—RUSSIA UNDER *QUASI*-MARTIAL LAW—MISERY OF THE PEOPLE—CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT BRUTALISE THE PEOPLE—THE PEASANTRY ARE PAGANS—NUMBERS OF DISSENTERS—THE *MUZHIK*—FORTUNATE POSITION OF THE NATIVES OF INDIA—RUSSIA CANNOT USE HER STRENGTH—LESSONS OF THE RUSSO-TURKISH WARS OF 1853-56 AND 1876-78.

Nicholas I.'s despotism.

DURING the reign of Nicholas I. (1825-55), the late Tzar's younger brother, repressive measures were continued. Intellectual and political development ceased throughout the empire. Popular restiveness under the gagging ordinances of the Tzar now and again broke into rebellion; but Nicholas was merciless, and neither tolerated ideas of personal liberty among his own subjects nor amongst those of a neighbour. A national rising of the Poles was extinguished with a brutal thoroughness which gained for the victims the sympathy of Europe. An insurrection in Hungary

was similarly crushed. Nicholas, tall, stern, impassive, was Tzardom incarnate. His idea of good government was "Russia for the Russians, but my will over all." He sought to Russianise all the inhabitants of his empire. The ignorant masses, cowed by his commanding presence and limitless prerogative, venerated him as a god. He felt the incense of their worship, and believed himself infallible. His reason became blinded. He blundered into his second war with Turkey. In his first (1826-29) he had easily induced France and England to join him in championing the cause of Greece. At Navarino the Sultan's fleet was annihilated, and soon after Turkish resistance collapsed. Nicholas expected France and England to be as complacent in 1853 as they had been in 1826, and so he ordered his armies to occupy the Danubian principalities. To his surprise his former allies turned against him, and protected the unspeakable Turk instead of the Turk's oppressed Christian subjects.

The Crimean war and its consequences.

The war began with the defeat of the Tzar's *fellaheen* legions by the ragged battalions of the Sultan. That defeat was the precursor of the Crimean war—a war which killed Nicholas, but redeemed the credit of Russia. Her defence of Sevastopol converted the ignominy of the disaster on the Danube—inflicted as it had been by Turkey single-handed—into the glory of having withstood for eighteen months, alone and unaided, the armed strength of France, England, Turkey, and Sardinia,

and the malevolent neutrality of Austria. Creditable though the defence was to the arms of Russia, the invasion of the sacred soil, the beleaguering of the strong city, and the bombardment of the coast towns, was a bitter revelation of failure to Tzar and his people. Even before his death popular faith in the wisdom of Nicholas and his system had begun to grow cold. Under the gathering wrath of the nation Tzar and Tchinovniks were taught humility. A revolution was clearly imminent, when early in 1855 Nicholas opportunely died, and his son Alexander II. reigned in his stead.

Progress towards constitutional Government.

Tongues and pens were now loosed. The censorship was defied; Tchinism derided as synonymous with incompetence and peculation; and the large-hearted and bewildered Alexander confused by a hundred schemes of reform, under each of which Russia was to leap at one bound from her state of medieval backwardness to the position of leader of progress amongst the nations of the West. The crisis was acute. The Tzar met it by a series of concessions to the popular demands, which, whether wise or premature, were yet for the moment necessary for the preservation of the imperial system. He made peace with France and England. He took his people into his confidence, and consulted them how best to remedy the ills of the body politic. Popular expectations were high; the hitherto voiceless masses were to have a share in their own government; the Tchinovniks recovered courage and spoke with confidence of the regenera-

tion of Russia under a constitution. The contagion of the reform enthusiasm had now reached the 46 millions of peasants who were all, but in different degrees, serfs and bondsmen. Of that number, roundly half were Crown peasants and partially free; whilst the other half belonged to private landlords and were practically slaves. The former were at once given their personal liberty, but the emancipation of the latter was complicated by the difficulty of reconciling the opposing interests of cultivators and landlords, and of metamorphosing the former into communities of laborious peasant proprietors. By emancipation the serfs understood the free rendition to themselves of land which was still traditionally their own. In effect, about half the arable land of the country was perpetually leased to them, not individually but corporately, as communes, subject to certain payments, dues, or rent to the late landlords, and taxes to the State and the commune.

Emancipation of the serfs.

Hitherto the peasantry had lived like the cattle in the field, without thought for the morrow, clothed and fed by the masters for whom they worked. Now they were free men, each with a proprietary share in the land of his commune, but each liable in dues and taxes for a sum in roubles equivalent to about three pounds sterling. To the *muzhik's* mind, as life was still to be made miserable by hard work and heavy taxation, there was no practical advantage in freedom over slavery. To his late proprietor the change was equally disappointing. Hitherto he

had lived as an easy spendthrift amongst obedient serfs. Now, to get a reasonable return from his reduced estate, he had to adopt the *rôle* of practical farmer, till his fields by free labour, keep exact accounts, and overcome prejudice and laziness by tact and persuasion, instead of by order and the fear of the knout.

Why the abolition of serfdom failed.

The abolition of serfdom was the most beneficent measure ever undertaken and carried out in Russia for the good of the people. Unfortunately the general impatience for reforms, and the discredit into which the old system had fallen, caused the Tzar and his advisers to effect the change precipitately, instead of with the cautious deliberation such a vast social revolution demanded. But even had the new peasant proprietary been fit for freedom and its responsibilities, they would have been crushed by the conditions with which the gift was weighted. Had what we call in the Panjab progressive assessments, with elasticity of demand according to each season's harvest, been imposed on the communes, they might in time have risen to their novel environment, have learned how rightly to prize and use their improved status, and how to develop their backward estates. But as the old proprietary insisted that they should be amply compensated for their losses, and the Government that its taxes should be punctually paid in full, the peasantry were naturally sacrificed. To them the leap from serfdom to freedom was much the same as release would be to a prisoner conditional on his earning an honest livelihood, though

still felon-marked and weighed down by heavy manacles and fetters. Forced to steal in order to live, he would soon be in gaol again. So it has been with masses of *muzhiks*. Forced to borrow to pay dues and taxes, their indebtedness has become great, and millions are now practically enslaved to their creditors, and bound to render those very personal services from which their deliverance from serfdom was intended to free them.

Too hasty reforms.

Thus the great reform of 1861 left both classes and masses discontented and antagonistic. It was the Biblical case of the fish and the stone over again. Liberal ideas continued to spread, but every concession naturally increased the popular demands. "*L'appétit vient en mangeant*," whether the eaters be Russian peasants or Irish Nationalists. In 1866 local self-government (*Zenstvo*) was granted to the provinces; but the people were not fit for the gift, and the measure was a failure. It merely whetted the appetite for further reforms. It was supposed to be the preliminary step towards the establishment of Representative Government. But the Tzar had no such intention. Insurrections broke out, but, being isolated and unconnected, were easily suppressed. The Poles, too, for whom the advanced party in Russia professed to feel sympathy, struck a blow for freedom, but were shot, hung, and massacred, with an indiscriminating cruelty which sent a shudder throughout the civilised world. The fact is, that Alexander II. sought to reconcile and even promote the incompatible—autocratism with

democratism. As autocrat he made military service obligatory for all Russians, reorganised his army, and absorbed into the empire, after successful campaigns, Bokhara, Khiva, and Khokand. Such measures pleased the Russians. Territorial expansion and increased power gratify the national sentiment.

Political schools. The Nihilists.

As liberal autocrat, however, the Tzar was powerless to restrain or regulate the activity of the various political schools which his reforms had encouraged. The most ardent and most sympathetic with the people were those subsequently misnamed Nihilists, patriotic but misguided enthusiasts, whose aim was to democratise Russia in a day, ignoring the fact that change, to be permanent, "broadens slowly down, from precedent to precedent." Many well-informed persons, confounding a few extremists with the whole party, believe that Nihilists are physical-force terrorists of the Clan-na-Gael type. The belief is entirely erroneous. The great majority of the school are men and women of the highest culture in Russia, —revolutionaries or social democrats if you will, but still self-sacrificing, thoughtful patriots, whose aspiration is the regeneration of Russia by the establishment of parliamentary Government.

Aims of Pan-Slavists.

Very different to them, less visionary, less unselfish, but more practicable and more successful, are the Pan-Slavists, whose motto is, "Russia for the Russians, and not for Tzar or his Tchinovniks." They would expel or Russianise all foreign elements,

whether Jew or Gentile, civilise the people according to their own ideas of Russian idiosyncrasies, and prosecute the national crusade against Turkey until all orthodox Eastern Christians were freed from the Musalman yoke and Russianised. Their leaders are astute intolerant patriots, who push the propaganda of their school as much for their own material self-interests as in furtherance of their conception of the national welfare.

Results of the 1876-78 Russo-Turkish war.

It was owing to their clever, persistent, but unscrupulous manipulation of popular forces that Alexander II., like his father, was drawn into war with Turkey in 1876-78. Its results, though seemingly less disastrous for Russia than its predecessor, have proved quite as unfortunate. Ostensibly the sole object of the war was the philanthropic desire of Russia to deliver her Bulgarian and Roumelian co-religionists from the Turkish yoke. This was accomplished; but Russia's real and immediate aim, the assimilation and Russification of the two provinces, was frustrated by the voice of Europe, which erected Bulgaria and Roumelia into autonomous and constitutional States. Thus Constantinople, the goal of Russia's ambition in Europe, becomes less attainable every year. The way is obstructed, if not closed for the present, by the intervention of two liberal self-governing nations—Roumania and Bulgaria—whose institutions are diametrically opposed to those of autocratic Russia.

Were that empire similarly autonomous, all Slav

peoples would doubtless be gradually drawn together, by natural human gravitation, into one great confederation under the hegemony of Russia. Speaking selfishly, the preservation of what is called the balance of power—that equipoise of the conflicting interests of nations in Europe and Asia—depends on the continuance of autocratic rule, and the reign of ignorance and superstition in Russia. Were she free, enlightened, and autonomous, her 120 millions—stronger than to-day through a quickened national life, and a consciousness of increased power—would not tolerate for another decade their rigid exclusion from the open sea, an exclusion hitherto due to the jealousy of two distant Western nations.

Autocracy keeps Russia weak.

With exchequer empty, the paper rouble—the only currency—at 35 per cent under the silver rouble, army decimated by battle and disease, and the fruits of victory plucked from him at the Berlin Conference, Alexander II. had, in the summer of 1878, to bear the reproaches of his people as best he could. They told him that he had allowed England, Austria, and Greece to gain territory without any sacrifice of life or treasure, whilst they, who had fought, bled, and conquered for him, had received nothing but the barren satisfaction of emancipating Bulgarians and Roumelians, who under bondage even had been freer, happier, and richer than their deliverers. Not only had those favoured peoples been liberated from the easy yoke of the Turk, but, with their own Tzar's assent, autonomy had been granted as well. As after the Napoleonic wars, so

Liberal propaganda repressed. Murder of Alexander II.

now, a foreign war had opened the eyes of the Russian peasantry to their own wretchedness. Why did their Tzar, or rather his Tchinovniks, brutify and pauperise them, whilst others were instructed, lightly taxed, and comparatively rich? The feeling of revolt against their leaders for keeping them in leading-strings was general amongst the peasantry, and was skilfully inflamed by both Pan-Slavists and Nihilists. Revolutionary discontent permeated all grades of society. Once again in Russian history the swing of the pendulum was backwards. Repressive measures were adopted. The extremists amongst the Nihilists retorted by murdering a few obnoxious high Tchinovniks. Restriction was tightened into persecution. The next retort was the murder of the Tzar on March 31, 1881.

Russia under *quasi*-martial law since 1881.

Just as the Phœnix Park murders in 1882 alienated for a time all English sympathy from Irish Nationalists, and constrained a weak Government to resort to coercion, so the Tzar's assassination in 1881 caused a revulsion of educated feeling throughout Russia, and enabled his son and successor, Alexander III., to reduce the liberties of his subjects to those of a State under martial law. He deliberately adopted as his ideal form of government the hard-and-fast centralisation system of his grandfather, Nicholas I. He has brought that system to a perfection unforeseen forty years ago, when railway and telegraphic communication were in their infancy. One by one the rights and privileges of the people

have been curtailed or withdrawn, until now throughout the empire there is no will, no volition, no voice but those of the Tzar and his St Petersburg Tchinovniks.

From birth to the grave the Russian is *in statu pupillari*. An inquisitorial supervision is exercised over his education—if any is permitted—his course of study, his choice of a profession, and even his duties as a husband and father. Freedom of speech or of pen is permitted to no one; all expression of unfavourable opinion on the acts or omissions of Government is rigorously repressed; literature and all curricula of study are subjected to a censorship which boycotts "anti-Russian" matter — that is, whatever is held to be inimical to the Tzar and his Government. To maintain the universal espionage necessitated by such a system, an army of informers is spread broadcast over the land. They unearth conspiracies and secret societies, and so terrorise the mind that articulate discontent is hardly existent in Russia. When a man knows that for a true or misrepresented speech he may be exiled to Siberia, he is careful about what he says or writes. Under such a so-called paternal Government the mental stagnation of the people is so great that many millions of the peasantry really believe, as they are taught, that they were only created to work and pay taxes for the Tzar and his Tchinovniks. For the masses, what He forbids is wrong, what He permits is right. He forbids the acquisition of knowledge, except under leading-strings for a few;

The people abject and miserable.

hence learning is sin. He encourages dissolute living and the drinking of *vodka;* hence debauchery and drunkenness are virtues. Yes; the Russian Government is opposed to the spread of temperance, because more than a third of the ordinary imperial taxation is derived from the excise duties on alcohol. The Government, too, is blind to immorality and all low vices, because prostituted minds conceive no treason.

Church and Government partners in brutalising the people.

And the Church in Holy Russia, does it not strive to raise the people from the shiftless, helpless fatalism in which they exist? No; it, too, is passive like the people. The Tzar is its supreme Head, and Church and State are wedded partners in the work of brutalising the minds and bodies of the masses. The Church is at most but a humble associate in the vast organisation for extortion known as the Government of Russia. The priesthood have in fact little education beyond that necessary for the due performance of the rites and ceremonies which in Russia make up religion. Of theology and holy living neither priest nor peasant has any conception. To attend church regularly, to cross or prostrate himself before an Icon, to take the Holy Communion, to fast, to perform a pilgrimage perhaps,—the due observance of these sums up the whole duty of man, and secures salvation. These things the ignorant do punctiliously, whilst the educated, the truly emancipated, look on with contemptuous approval. For most of them religion of any kind, and their own in particular, is an old-

world superstition, only useful as a governing agency.

Russia is in fact still Pagan rather than Christian. She has adopted the externals of ritualistic Christianity, but not its spirit. If it were not so, would the idolatry of Icon-worship be so universal? An Icon is a half-length portrait of Christ, the Madonna, or a saint, and is either simple or miracle-working. The former are made by the million, and are found in every house and hut throughout the empire; the latter few, "not made with hands," but revealable at command. When a new miracle-working Icon is required, it is not officially recognised until its heavenly manufacture and miraculous powers have been duly examined and authenticated to the Tzar's satisfaction. Accepted, it becomes forthwith an object of veneration and of pilgrimage. Such an Icon is of course a source of wealth to its fortunate possessor, generally a monastery.

The peasantry rather Pagans than Christians.

Happily for Russia, all Russians are not orthodox. Upwards of thirteen millions are dissenters, some rationalists, some austere Puritans, but all earnest, energetic, and self-improving people. Officially they are regarded as "anti-Russian," and as such persecuted. There are also a round million of German colonists, whose villages stand out as oases of self-help, amidst the thousands of melancholy Russian communes in which prosperity is unknown. It is largely the consciousness of inferiority which makes the true Russian, whether Tchinovnik or *muzhik*, hate the German.

The heterodox numerous, earnest, and enlightened.

The solid stolid *muzhik* a case of arrested development.

The Russian peasantry are by nature enduring, obedient, and easily satisfied. They are consequently adapted, like the races of India, for a despotic form of government. Had they fallen under a benevolent despotism, such as that exercised for a hundred years by the East India Company in India, they might by now have become fitted for self-government. Unfortunately, since Peter the Great's vivifying influence ceased, they have been governed by a succession of Tzars not one of whom was a true statesman and patriot. The promptings of selfishness, empirical benevolence, or timidity, have in turn swayed the mind and governed the actions of each autocrat. In result the *muzhik* of to-day is in the same state of arrested development as he was when Tartar khan and native prince sweated him for their mutual benefit.

The natives of India more fortunate than the natives of Russia.

The fate of the 300 million inhabitants of India has been more fortunate. Their own rulers were, with the exception of Akbar (1556-1605), as selfish as Russian Princes or Tzars have been; but being mostly chiefs of immigrant foreigners, the hold of such a ruler over the subject population was never strong. Hence village communities and tribal groups retained cohesion and even autonomy. Thus in India there never was under our predecessors centralisation as in Russia. Under our administration the rule of the East India Company was a benevolent despotism, kindly impartial but yet selfish, as the trading objects of the Company dictated. When the rule of the East India Company was, after the

Mutiny, succeeded by that of the Queen, the races of India received their *magna charta* of citizenship in the British empire in what is known as the Queen's Proclamation. Since then the administration has been governed by a higher view of duty than previously obtained. Our aim—though often too precipitately and unsympathetically pushed—is to fit our Indian fellow-subjects for that Imperial citizenship which the Proclamation of November 1858 conceded to them. With that object in view, the education of the masses is encouraged in town and village with almost as much persistent energy as it is in England. Unfortunately, Muhammadans and agriculturists generally have been slow to appreciate the boon of knowledge offered to them, whilst non-agriculturists, especially the Hindu trading classes, have valued it almost too highly. So successful have our efforts amongst the latter class been, that within the last decade we have conceded to towns, and to some extent to districts as well, a small measure of real self-government. Towns, districts, and even subdivisions of districts, have now each their self-governing corporations, of whose members at least two-thirds are elected. Their powers are of course still very restricted. Government decides what taxes may be imposed and what proportions of income shall be spent on police, education, conservancy, dispensaries, and the like. Children must learn to walk before they can run. In large municipalities, in which men of leisure, light, and leading are numerous, the measure of self-

government conceded is more real. In them the city fathers manage their own affairs, under the general control of the District Officer, with, on the whole, commendable circumspection. A further step towards the beginning of constitutional government was taken in 1893, by the introduction into the Viceregal and Provincial Legislative Councils of a certain number of elected non-official members. The liberty of the press in India—a liberty as much abused as it is in America—has long been exercised. As newspapers abound, and no censorship exists, the acts of Government and its officials are freely criticised. As a rule, the tone of the native press is hostile to Government, because the proprietors and editors are generally men of education who have failed to procure positions under Government, to which they think their abilities entitled them, and because in India not a single newspaper is in any way subsidised by Government—a fact probably unique in the Old World. Some think that in a country like India a free press is the safety-valve of the Government engine. In it every grievance, real or imaginary, is ventilated. In India there are believed to be as yet no secret societies, because there is no occasion for them. Every man does and says what he likes; and rich and poor—high English official and mean coolie—receive equal justice. Had Russia been as wisely governed since the time when, under Peter the Great, she emerged from her Asiatic isolation and became a leading factor in European politics, she

would to-day be a great nation, influencing the world as much by her enlightenment as by her force of armed numbers. Instead of that, she is still, through bad government, but a vast inert mass of ignorant humanity, powerful through weight and solidarity alone.

Russia under despotism cannot use her strength.

When she goes to war, she fights like an ill-trained unwieldy giant, who does not know how to make the most of his strength. If he wins, he owes his victory, not to skill or superior courage, but to physical preponderance alone. A consideration of the history of Russia's last two wars of aggression against moribund Turkey, and the enormous disproportion in numbers and resources between the combatants, will demonstrate the aptness of the above comparison.

The lessons of the Russo-Turkish wars of 1853-56 and 1877-78.

In 1853-54, after ten years of careful preparation, Russia attacked Turkey and besieged Silistria with an army of 80,000 men, but was defeated and driven back across the Danube before France or England had put a soldier into the field. In 1877 Russia again invaded Turkey, but for the summer and autumn of that year was baffled and worsted on many bloody fields, both in Bulgaria and Armenia. In Europe the whole might of Russia was impotent from May to December to dislodge 45,000 Turks from the improvised defences of the open town of Plevna.

In Asia the military incapacity of Turkey's ponderous enemy was as real but not so conspicuous as in Europe. Kars fell in November, after Mukhtiar

Pasha with his ragged, poorly drilled, and famished soldiers had successfully for six months held at bay the army of the Caucasus, over 100,000 strong.

In the first period of the 1853-56 war Turkey was encouraged by the certainty of soon receiving help from France and England. In the 1877-78 struggle she had no such hope. She was unaided, fighting amidst a hostile population; whereas Russia was strengthened by alliances or understandings with Roumania, Servia, Montenegro, and Greece, and by the whole peasantry of Bulgaria. The Sultan's army was raised from 16 million Musalman subjects; the Tzar's from his whole Christian population, numbering not less than 100 millions. Turkey was bankrupt when war was declared against her, and from the beginning to the end of the campaign her soldiers fought without pay, without proper food or clothing, and fully half of her troops had never been through a course of musketry, and were, in fact, raw peasants seized from the plough, who had never handled a breech-loader until the fighting began.

When we remember how, only sixteen years ago, the manhood of 16 million Muhammadans, mostly Asiatics, single-handed waged a successful fight for many months against Russia and her allies, and only succumbed in winter when exhausted from want of food, warm clothing, and munitions of war, English Russophobists, fearful already for the safety of India, ought to be ashamed of their apprehensions.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AFGHANS AND THEIR COUNTRY.

BOUNDARIES OF AFGHANISTAN—MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS—THE HINDU KUSH THE DOMINATING FEATURE—THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MASTER—EXPANSION OF THE AFGHANS OR PATHANS—THEIR LANGUAGE—GHILZAI CONQUEST OF PERSIA—AFGHANISTAN BECOMES AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM—ITS OXUS BOUNDARY—THE 1885-87 DEMARCATION—TENSION BETWEEN AMIR AND VICEROY—SUCCESS OF DURAND MISSION—SUCCESSION TO THE AMIRSHIP—THE FOUR DIVISIONS OF AFGHANISTAN: PAMIRS WITH BADAKHSHAN, KAFIRISTAN, AND GILGIT AGENCY—AFGHAN TURKESTAN AND HERAT: NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN.

Boundaries and area of Afghanistan.

HAVING acquired some knowledge of Russia, whose persistent advance towards India is the cause of the Indo-Russian Question, we pass on to Afghanistan, the country of rocks and stones, which has the misfortune of being now sandwiched between two great expanding European empires. Broadly stated, Russia bounds those regions on the north and north-west for 900 miles, the deserts of Persia and Baluchistan on the west and south for 800 miles, and India's fringe of independent Musalman tribes, now wholly within our sphere of influence, on the east for 600 miles. The Russo-Afghan and Indo-Afghan boundaries will alone require examination. The others,

though possessing histories of their own, are unlikely to give rise to difficulties for an indefinite future.

Mountains and rivers.

As above limited, the unappropriated countries lying between Russia and India contain about 240,000 square miles, an area roundly twice that of Great Britain and Ireland. A glance at the map shows that Afghanistan is a square block of mountainous territory with a broad projection on her north-east side running up into the debatable Pamir plateau—the so-called "Roof of the World," where meet or whence radiate the highest mountain systems of our planet, amongst which are the Himalayas and Hindu Kush.

The Hindu Kush.

The latter mass strikes off in a straight line W.S.W. for 400 miles to a point a little north of the gaps known as the Irak and Shibar passes, which connect Kabul *viâ* Bamian with Afghan Turkestan. Here the Hindu Kush continues almost due west under the name of Koh-i-Baba for about 100 miles, when it separates into two ranges, one continuing westward and called the Sufed Koh or White Mountains, the other, called the Siah Koh or Black Mountains, running south-west. From the northern part of the Koh-i-Baba a ridge known as Paghman is thrown off southwards, an eastern prolongation of which connects the Hindu Kush with the Sulimans of our North-Western frontier. It is a gap in this ridge, locally called Sher Dahan or lion's mouth, which is the highest point on the route from Kabul to Kandahar. North of the Irak pass

the Hindu Kush gradually increases in altitude and thickness, until it becomes a gigantic tangle of mountains compared with which the Alps are pigmies. Its few passes are all over 11,500 feet in altitude, long, intricate, and with difficulty traversable by pack-animals in single file during the summer months only. South of the Irak pass, as already noted, the Hindu Kush disentangles itself and throws out clearly defined ridges, between which lie most of the river valleys of Northern and Southern Afghanistan. Thus the Hari Rud, which enriches the Herat valley, flows westwards between the Sufed Koh and the Siah Koh. The Helmand and its tributaries flow southwards towards the Seistan lake, between the Koh-i-Baba and Paghman range, and the Kabul river eastwards from the north-east side of the latter. From the northern and western slopes of the Hindu Kush the whole drainage flows towards the Oxus.

The Hindu Kush is the dominating geographical feature of Afghanistan.

Thus the Hindu Kush, with its continuations the Koh-i-Baba, Sufed Koh, and Siah Koh, is the dominating geographical feature of Afghanistan, the watershed of the Oxus, Indus, and Helmand rivers with their affluents. It is also the wall of separation between Mongolian and Afghan, and the home of the remnants of still independent tribes, such as the Kafirs of the north-east block of mountains and the Hazaras of the parallel chains south-west of Bamian. That those two peoples have hitherto—the Kafirs successfully and the Hazaras partially—repulsed all invaders, and almost maintained their

seclusion against the inquisitive traveller, is evidence of the great natural strength of two large portions of the Hindu Kush system.

That barrier, then, determines both the hydrography and the ethnography of the regions still intervening between the political boundaries of Russia and India.

The Afghans have a master.

The inhabitants of those regions, Kafiristan wholly and Hazara partially excepted, have now for the first time in history a master in their present Amir, Abdur Rahman Khan, G.C.S.I., a man who is more of a despot than the Tzar of Russia, typical autocrat though he is. With two great civilised empires pressing her from three sides, Afghanistan can never again relapse into her former normal condition of a congeries of savage independent tribes, occasionally owing a loose and uncertain allegiance to Shah of Persia, Ruler of India, or even local Shah or Amir.

Racial distribution.

The present racial distribution and the domination of the Afghan tribes over all the others illustrate the law of the expansion of the fittest. The earliest records indicate that Iranian peoples were settled in Afghanistan until successive hordes of Scythians from the north swept over the land for a thousand years into the fourth century of our era, when Turko-Mongolian immigrations began and continued for five hundred years. The widely diffused Tajiks of to-day are of Iranian stock. The Kirghiz of the Steppes and the Pamirs, the Turkomans of Trans-Caspiana, the Hazaras and some of the hybrid Aimaks of the Paropamasian ranges, including the

Herat valley, and the Uzbegs of Afghan Turkestan, are Turko- and Tartar Mongolians.

Who the Afghans are, whether of mixed origins, Turks, or Jews, as their own traditions and genealogies indicate and some Western ethnologists believe, is not clear. They first appear in history in the eleventh century as a tribe inhabiting the western slopes of the Suliman mountains between Ghazni and Baluchistan. They were early converts to Islam, a faith whose irruptive and subversive force was largely instrumental in the Afghanisation of the country between the Hindu Kush and Indus. According to their own traditions, the pure-blood Afghans were the lost ten tribes of Israel, whom Nebuchadnezzar carried off into captivity. They were settled in Ghor, south-east of Herat, now part of the Hazara country, and were early converted to Islam by an Arab missionary. Subsequently they migrated eastwards to Zamindawar and the country about Kandahar. The descendants of those who remained there are the Abdalis or Durranis of to-day. The Ghilzais, the other great Afghan tribe, are regarded as affiliated and not true Afghans. After their conversion they gradually spread northwards, absorbing or displacing all accessible tribes, and so amalgamating their languages into one common speech that to-day the Afghans practically form one people numbering about 2½ millions. Origin and spread of the Afghans or Pathans.

An attempt is sometimes made to distinguish between true and affiliated Afghan tribes, the former being termed Afghans, the latter Pathans. As a Their language.

matter of fact, all who speak Pashto call themselves Pashtuns or Pathans; whilst outsiders, and particularly Persians, refer to them as Afghans. Their common tongue is grammatically degenerated from Sanskrit, whilst its vocabulary is composed of a nucleus of untraced or so-called original words supplemented by a mass of others of Sanskrit, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic origins. Like Hindustani, Pashto appears to be the result of the unconscious fusion of several clashing languages—the gradual product of necessity as the strongest tribe assimilated its weaker neighbours. Since the time of Mahmûd of Ghazni, the first of the series of Muhammadan invaders of India (1001-24), Afghanistan has always, with long intervals of confusion, had a so-called ruler, but even during the Moghal period (1524-1707) no emperor held more of the country than the open valleys. Each tribe was practically independent within its own limits, although to some extent a vassal of the Great Moghal, in whose armies its warriors sometimes served, acquiring lands and honours in Hindustan. Moghal supremacy was never secure, and even during its continuance was at times interrupted by the Uzbegs, who seized the trans-Hindu-Kush country, or by the conquest of Kandahar and Southern Afghanistan by Persia. The trans-border tribes now within our political but beyond our actual frontier were all along independent.

The Ghilzais conquer and

Early in the eighteenth century the great Ghilzai confederation of tribes, who had owed an unstable

allegiance sometimes to the Delhi Emperor and sometimes to the Shah of Persia, threw off the Persian yoke, and even conquered their suzerain. They were destroyers and plunderers, not rulers. They rioted in Persia for seven years (1725-32), in which time that unhappy empire was reduced from prosperity to a state of decay and desolation, signs of which are still pitifully conspicuous. A third of her people perished; her public buildings were razed; her carefully irrigated champaigns converted into deserts; her trees and orchards cut down. At the end of the seventh year of confusion and devastation an avenger uprose, known to the world as Nadir Shah. He annihilated his country's Afghan oppressors, and as Shah of Persia incorporated Afghanistan itself into his dominions.

devastate Persia for seven years, 1725-32.

Upon his assassination in 1747 his Afghan contingent, composed chiefly of Abdalis and Ghilzais, withdrew to Kandahar, proclaimed the independence of their country, and elected as their king Ahmad Khan, a Sadozai Abdali, known in history as Ahmad Shah, Durrani, first Shah or King of the Afghans. He rapidly built up a feudal system of government, and by leaving to each tribe its internal independence and directing their fighting energies against India, he consolidated the tribes who spoke the Pashto tongue into a nation. Since then Afghanistan has been a kingdom, often torn and temporarily dismembered by civil war, but always independent and governed by a native sovereign, whose power has corresponded with his

Afghanistan becomes an independent kingdom.

capacity. Of Ahmad Shah's successors only two have achieved greatness — Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-63), who took the title of Amir or Commander, and Abdur Rahman, the present Amir, his grandson. Before Dost Muhammad died he had extended his dominions over all the territories since recognised by Russia and England as inside the limits of Afghanistan. His hold over the western or trans-Hindu-Kush dependencies of Kabul, now collectively termed Afghan Turkestan, was weak and uncertain.

Oxus fixed as Afghanistan's northern boundary in 1873.

During the negotiations which led to the famous Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873, Russia would have preferred for the north-western and northern boundary of Afghanistan the line of the Hindu Kush, which divides Uzbeg from Afghan nationality, but England insisted on that of the Oxus. That river had, as Sir Henry Rawlinson says, "separated Iran and Turan, the two ethnic divisions of the early East. It had limited the great Mohamadan satrapy of Máwar-en-Nahr. It had bounded the conquests of Ahmad Shah on the first institution of an Afghan monarchy." It was, moreover, east of Khwaja Salar, the site of an Oxus ferry on the highroad from Bokhara to Balkh, the farthest line to which Dost Muhammad had ever pushed his unstable authority. After prolonged negotiations, the Oxus from Khwaja Salar upwards to its assumed source in Lake Victoria, in the centre of the Pamir region, was declared to be the northern boundary of Afghanistan, whilst the desert "belonging to inde-

pendent tribes of Turkomans" was loosely accepted as the boundary on the north-west.

The actual delimitation of the latter was carried out in 1885-87. The "Panjdeh incident," and the international squabbles preceding and following it, which brought Russia and England to the brink of war, and cost India a heavy expenditure in preparations, are fresh in all recollections, and require no mention here. The 1885-87 demarcation.

Although the Russo-Afghan boundary had been settled, that of the independent tribes occupying the mountains between the territories under the direct administration of the Government of India and Kabul remained undefined. None of those tribes had ever collectively owed even a nominal allegiance to either Power. Malcontent sections had been in the habit of maintaining an occasional connection with both, trying to play one off against the other to their own protection and material benefit, sending deputations to the Amir, making specious offers of their devotion to his interests, and being slighted or favoured according to the policy of the hour. The Government of India sought to include all those tribes within its own political frontier, and had exchanged views with the Amir on the subject.

Unfortunately negotiations came to a dead-lock. There were naturally some questions upon which the two Governments had divergent convictions. By degrees a fixed idea took possession of the Amir that the Viceroy wished to treat him as if he were Tension between Amir and Viceroy.

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not a powerful independent sovereign, but a mere Indian feudatory like the Nizam of Hydrabad or the Maharaja of Kashmir. On one occasion the Viceroy gave the Amir some friendly advice about the relentless cruelty of some incidents in his home policy. The Amir resented what he deemed an unjustifiable interference with his exercise of sovereign rights inside Afghanistan. Little by little the breach widened. We were now (1888-89—1892-93) pursuing an active forward policy from end to end of our North-Western frontier. We had even made a tunnel through the Khwaja Amran range, and established a railway terminus on its Kandahar side at New Chaman, several miles, it was alleged, inside the Amir's territory, without having first obtained permission from His Highness. We had also stored railway plant for an extension to Kandahar, and one of our newspapers had, with pardonable pride, boasted of our ability to run a train into that city at a few weeks' notice. Such remarks, and, indeed, the general tone of the Anglo-Indian press conversant with frontier matters, tended rather to increase than to diminish the official tension. The Amir suspected that Government officers freely supplied the 'Pioneer,' the powerful Allahabad journal, with information, and regarded that paper, with some show of reason, as the unofficial mouthpiece of the Government of India. The friction between the two Governments was extreme: each considered that the other was interfering with tribes wholly within its own sole

sphere of influence; each had apparently gone beyond its undoubted rights—we in quiet furtherance of our new policy, the Amir with an exasperating parade of defiance, deliberately designed to try the Viceroy's forbearance almost to breaking-point. The Anglo-Indian press lectured both Viceroy and Amir; the military world of Upper India grew jubilant. A third war with Afghanistan was imminent; an ultimatum had been sent; the Amir was mad, was dying; his people were about to rise against his cruel rule; he was already seeking support, like his uncle before him, from Russia,—and all this time His Highness was continuing his retaliatory policy with cynical indifference to the commotion it was causing in Lahore, Simla, and Calcutta. However, when a military mission, headed by Lord Roberts, the 1878-80 conqueror of Afghanistan, supported by a large escort of British soldiers, was publicly pressed upon His Highness, he refused the offer with a diplomatic courtesy which made it impossible to quarrel with his decision. Six months went by, and the Amir was still at Kabul and our forces still in their cantonments.

Success of Durand Mission. Our political boundary agreed upon.

Having suppressed a rising amongst the Hazaras and improved in health, His Highness now, at his own time and through his own instrument, intimated his readiness to receive an unescorted Civil Mission. The invitation was gladly accepted. The Mission was at once despatched, spent a few pleasant and useful weeks in Kabul, and settled pending boundary questions to the entire satisfaction of all con-

cerned. The Government of India obtained a clear definition of its political frontier, the Amir the districts of Asmar and Birmal, and, what was of more value, an increased subsidy, whilst every officer of the Mission was decorated — including the cook: and well they deserved their rewards on the principle of honours for the successful. Cynical persons think that the Amir, by so easily gaining all he wanted, including the enhancement of his annual subsidy from 12 to 18 lakhs, and the right to import munitions of war without restriction, may yet show his gratitude by shortly attempting to extract further concessions from us. That is possible but unlikely, as His Highness, when not suffering from an attack of gout, is a sensible man, and knows that his country's, his personal, and his dynastic interests are dependent on the good offices and material aid of the Government of India. He knows, too, that should he break with us, we have ready to our hand in Sardār Ayūb Khan, who defeated us at Maiwand in 1880, a formidable competitor for the Amirship. That gentleman, who resides at Rawalpindi as the honoured guest of the Government of India, is a man in the prime of life, of considerable culture and intelligence, and a close and interested observer of every move made by his great and so far successful rival.

The present happy relations recently established between the Governments of India and Afghanistan will presumably continue until the Amir dies

—and Abdur Rahman, though not yet fifty, is unable to walk or ride from gout, and has many enemies.

Succession to the Amirship.

On his death the usual struggle over the succession may take place, the competitors being Prince Habibulla, the eldest son, but of a slave mother, an intelligent, kindly, but weak man of twenty-four, with an impediment in his speech; and Prince Muhammad Umar, a boy of six, the image of his father, possessed already of what the Amir calls "the royal manner," and the child of a princess of the blood, a lady of determined character, who has made herself popular with the army. Should the Government of India, when the time comes, strongly support whomsoever the Amir may designate as heir-apparent, and the selection prove judicious, the crown will probably pass as if Afghanistan were a Constitutional State and not the one-man power it unfortunately is. In no case will it be possible for us to repeat our policy of 1863-69, and keep the ring whilst the half-brothers or other competitors fight it out between themselves. Such inaction might induce Russia to occupy Herat, as well as strategic points in Afghan Turkestan generally. She would contend, with some show of reason, that she was acting within her right in preserving order upon her Turkoman frontier did we fail to do so.

Delimited Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan of to-day, within the limits assigned to her on the north and west by Anglo-Russian agreements in 1873 and 1886, and on

the east through the Durand Mission in 1893, can be most conveniently described in four divisions, based on geographical and ethnic distinctions, viz. :—

I. Pamirs, with connected territories.

I. The Pamirs, Badakhshan and Kafiristan on the north, with which it will be convenient to notice the territories within the jurisdiction of our lately reconstituted Gilgit agency.

II. Afghan Turkestan and Herat.

II. Afghan Turkestan or North-Western Afghanistan, including the Herat valley, a rough and in a European sense mountainous country, easily accessible to Russia, and inhabited by non-Afghans incapable of independence, who would prefer the Russian to the Afghan yoke, and, by all accounts, the regulated freedom of a British dependency to either.

III. Northern Afghanistan.

III. Northern Afghanistan[1]—that is, Kabul and the surrounding country for seventy or eighty miles to the north and west, and down to a line drawn straight from Dera Ismail Khan on the Indus to Herat on the south—an intricate network of difficult mountains and lateral valleys, the present home of the most turbulent of the fighting tribes, collectively called Afghans or Pathans.

IV. Southern Afghanistan.

IV. Southern Afghanistan—that is, Kandahar and the fairly open and arid country round it and westwards to the Persian desert, occupied by mixed and comparatively tractable tribes. Its boundaries with Persia and Baluchistan are not yet clearly de-

[1] This name seems on the whole more suitable than Afghanistan Proper or North-Eastern Afghanistan.

fined, but are of little importance, as the debatable country is desert.

Some information will now be given about each of these four divisions, attention being confined to matter calculated to help the formation of an opinion on the questions raised in the opening chapter of this book.

CHAPTER VII.[1]

FOUR DIVISIONS OF AFGHANISTAN.

I. THE PAMIRS: CLAIMS OF RUSSIA—ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT OF 1873—VALUE OF THE PAMIRS—BADAKHSHAN—KAFIRISTAN—GILGIT AGENCY AND ITS WORK—SECURITY OF INDIA ON THE PAMIR SIDE. II. AFGHAN TURKESTAN: POLITICAL HISTORY—THE 1885-87 BOUNDARY COMMISSION—HOW HELD BY AFGHANISTAN—RIPE FOR ANNEXATION BY RUSSIA—IF ANNEXED, WOULD ENGLAND FIGHT?—HERAT—RUSSIA DOMINANT IN NORTHERN PERSIA. III. NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN: ITS SMALL SIZE—ITS PEOPLES—THE GHILZAIS—EVENTUALITIES WITH RUSSIA IN POSSESSION OF AFGHAN TURKESTAN. IV. SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN: GENERAL DESCRIPTION—THE DURRANI TRIBE—THE HELMAND—SEISTAN SWAMP—ITS RECLAMATION—GIRISHK THE FUTURE BATTLE-FIELD BETWEEN RUSSIA AND ENGLAND IN INDIA.

I. THE PAMIRS, BADAKHSHAN, KAFIRISTAN, AND GILGIT AGENCY.

The Pamirs.

THE Pamir plateau, the western extension or end of the great Tibetan highlands, has been aptly

[1] The information contained in this and chapters ix. and x. is chiefly derived from Proceedings R.G.S., Government Gazettes and Administrative Reports, Parliamentary Papers, Newspapers and Magazine articles, 'The Statesman's Year-Book,' Encyclopedias, the late Dr Bellew's writings, and the statements of friends and personal knowledge. Confidential or official (unpublished) papers were avoided because of the delay their use entails. Government requires an officer making use of such papers to submit his MSS. to a censorship before permitting him to publish.

described[1] as "a vast table-land averaging 12,000 feet in height and 280 miles in length by 120 to 150 miles in breadth, ringed by a rough horse-shoe of mountain ranges, and intersected by snowy ridges and shallow trenches that deepen westwards, where the streams of the Oxus descend towards Bokhara." The characteristic types of landscape are "tent-shaped, glacier-coated mountains, divided by broad easy gaps, bare heights naked of verdure and shorn of forests by the bitter winds and frosts, desolate lakes, a region where for the most part there is neither fuel nor fodder, an Engadine of Asia, with nine months' winter and three months' cold weather; the home of the wild sheep, the summer haunt of a few wandering shepherds, Nomads' land if not No-man's-land." Thus this "half-way house to heaven," as the Chinese call it, comprises an area of 38,000 square miles, so absolutely worthless, uninhabitable, and impracticable, except for small and expensively equipped caravans, that until a few years ago none of the three empires, Russia, China, and India, whose boundaries meet somewhere within its limits, believed in the possibility of their squabbling for the lion's share in such an arctic region.

Russian claims to the Pamirs. The agreement of 1873.

Of the three, Russia was the first to conceive that her exclusive possession of the Pamirs would enable her to dominate Badakhshan, turn the eastern flank of the Hindu Kush, and thus open a

[1] See 'A Journey across the Pamir from North to South.' Proceedings R.G.S., January 1892.

route from the north towards India by the Boroghil pass and Chitral. So indifferent was England to the whole subject that in 1873, when the northern boundary of Afghanistan was determined by an Anglo-Russian agreement, Russia's title to almost the whole Pamir region was conceded by a careless mistake, as we had not taken the trouble to ascertain the course of the stream which we named as delimiting Afghanistan on the side of the Pamirs. That boundary was declared to be "Badakhshan, with its dependent district Wakan, from the Sarikul (Woods' Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha river with the Oxus (or Panjah) *on the west; the stream of the Oxus thus* forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province through its entire extent." In our Blue-book the italicised words were by oversight omitted, but we have accepted the text as printed above. A glance at the map will show that the stream issuing from the Sarikul, or Victoria Lake as our cartographers write it, flows south-west for about a hundred miles until joined by the Wakhansu at Kala Panjah, whence the united waters continue a south-western course for eighty miles more and then turn due north for a hundred miles to Kila Womar. That place is the point of junction with the Murghab, the river of largest volume in the Pamirs, and perhaps on that ground to be regarded as the true main stream of the Upper Oxus. Although Russia would practically acquire the whole Pamir plateau by taking her stand on the 1873

Agreement, she presses her title to more, and claims the whole drainage basins of all streams whose waters ultimately reach the Oxus. Were her pretensions admitted, she would acquire the Wakhansu and its tributaries as well, and bring her boundary up to the watershed of the Hindu Kush. Assuming that the ultimate delimitation will strictly follow the wording of the 1873 Agreement—and a greater surrender on our side is hardly conceivable —Russia will obtain in order from north to south the major parts of the worthless districts of Darwaz, Roshan, and Shighnan, all at present in the possession of Afghanistan, and part and parcel of the Amir's dominions. All three lie mostly on the right or Pamir bank of the Oxus or Panjah stream, but partly also on the left bank. What little pasturage and cultivation there is must be in the alluvial valley of the river.

Value of the Pamirs.

Should the 1873 Agreement be maintained, the acquisition of the Pamirs will be of small strategic advantage to Russia, because the whole region is practically useless for military purposes. Although it can never become a highroad to India, positions within its limits would give the possessor, if a Great Power, considerable political leverage against Afghanistan and India. The Anglo-Russian boundary in Asia would be practically conterminous for about sixty miles. The still intervening strip of Afghanistan, a portion of Wakhan, would only be about fifteen miles in breadth on that line. Established as Russia would be along a portion of our

political border, and pressing upon Badakhshan on two sides, she would — had not the Government of India forestalled her, as will be presently explained—be in a position to send, without attracting much notice, *agents provocateurs* into that country as well as into Chitral, and compete with the Amir for the allegiance of the hitherto unsubdued Kafirs of Kafiristan. Thus she might, at her pleasure, cause political unrest, if not actual rebellion, in those remote provinces.

Badakhshan.

Badakhshan she has long coveted. It was only in 1859 that the great Amir Dost Muhammad imposed his authority over it, and extracted a promise of tribute from its ruler. Previously its connection had been more with Bokhara or Khokand than with Kabul. Its potential value to Russia is obvious. It is a great wedge or projection of mountainous territory covering some 11,000 square miles, and occupying the whole of the northern bend of the Oxus from the Hindu Kush and Kafiristan to Darwaz. Its climate is generally "delightful," its valleys rich and well cultivated, its mineral wealth great, and its inhabitants, Tajiks, Turks, and Arabs, amenable to good government. Its length from east to west is about 120 miles, and its breadth from north to south about 90 miles. Through it passes the only direct caravan route between Western and Central Asia—a matter of small importance, as the trade can never be more than insignificant—but from it the Hindu Kush and the whole of Afghan Turkestan are turned, and Chitral with the

comparatively easy route thence to Jalalabad laid bare, both matters of grave moment for Afghanistan and India. However, Russia withdrew her claims to Badakhshan in 1873, and in the famous Agreement of that year, which makes the southern feeder of the Oxus the boundary between her dependencies and ours, expressly acknowledged "Badakhshan with its dependent district Wakhan" as "fully belonging to the Amir of Kabul."

Kafiristan. Kafiristan is one of the few remaining mysteries of Central Asia. It is a small self-contained block of probably under 7000 square miles, lying west of Chitral and directly south of Badakhshan. The rivers Chitral or Kunar, Kabul, and Panshir almost encircle Kafiristan. Its mountains form the head of the Hindu Kush system, impinging from the south on the Pamir plateau and dominating Badakhshan. Its peoples are Kafirs, idolaters, what you will, but, except some of the tribes to the south, not Musalmans. They may number in all about 100,000, but are probably diminishing. Their southern tribes are by degrees accepting Islam for the sake of peace, and gradually adopting the habits of their Musalman neighbours. Kafiristan is peculiarly interesting, because its tribes are supposed to be the sole surviving remnant of primitive Aryans, and are in possession of the only small tract in the world forming, in the midst of Muhammadan countries, an *enclave* which has never either embraced Islam or been successfully invaded by the followers of the Prophet. Most of its inhabitants are believed to

retain to this day the same faith and the same customs which they held in 324 B.C., when Alexander the Great's Macedonians skirted their fastnesses on the march to the invasion of India—indeed, some contend that the Kafirs may be descended from those soldiers, or from Greek colonists who accompanied or followed the army.[1] The conquest of Kafiristan has been the day-dream of every Muhammadan from Chengis Khan to the present Amir of Kabul, but up to date the dream has never been realised. The independence of the country is due to its inaccessibility. It lies, like the Pamirs, apart from any great highway, and its natural strength forbids the wasting of resources in an attempt to conquer its sturdy inhabitants.[1]

Gilgit Agency and its work.

Anticipating Russia's action in the Pamirs, the Government of India has within the last few years reconstituted the Gilgit Agency, annexed the adjacent robber State of Kanjut, and converted a nominal protectorate over Chitral into a reality. The Agent's charge extends along the whole southern face of the Pamirs for upwards of 200 miles from east to west, and has a depth southwards of about 100 miles. Of this great tract of 20,000 square miles not more than ten are cultivated, and not more than 100 are inhabitable all the year round. The population, exclusive of the garrison, may amount to one to the square mile, and is probably less. Life centres

[1] 'Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh,' by Major Biddulph, 1880; also "Notes on the Chugari and Neighbouring Tribes of Kafiristan," by Major Tanner: Proceedings R.G.S., vol. iii., 1881.

in the few flat alluvial spots found in the clefts in the mountains, through which rush the Chitral, Gilgit, and Hunza streams. Both Gilgit and Chilas have been strongly fortified and permanently garrisoned by Kashmir Imperial Service troops, supported by detachments from our native Bengal army. Outposts have also been constructed along the Gilgit-Chitral route *viâ* Yasin and Mastuj, and a political officer with a military escort has been lately located in Chitral itself. A good road, including a bridge over the Indus at Bunji, has been made from the Kashmir valley to Gilgit, and another is under construction to Chilas on the Indus *viâ* the British district of Hazara up the Kāghān glen. The maintenance of a garrison, which fluctuates between 2000 and 3000 soldiers, within the limits of the Gilgit Agency, is a heavy burden upon the small resources of Kashmir, and adds some lakhs to the annual military expenditure of India. As Gilgit produces a bare sufficiency for its own scanty population, supplies for our garrisons there have to be sent up from India and Kashmir. To provision some 3000 men — as followers have to be included — between June and October, the five months when the passes are open, using for transport purposes only coolies, mules, ponies, and bullocks, themselves and their attendants, all requiring to be fed at each stage for from 100 to 150 miles, according to route followed, is an annually recurring charge which amounts to several lakhs of rupees. Roadmaking, too, is an expensive item.

India secure on the Northern or Pamir side.

Costly though the Gilgit establishment may be, the money is well spent, because the measures taken not only give absolute security against the possibility of successful intrigue or hostile action on the part of Russia from the direction of the Pamirs, but place India in a stronger position in that region than Russia can ever hope to attain, even should the Pamir delimitation follow the line indicated by the 1873 Agreement. We hold excellent positions in a perfect climate upon our extreme Northern or Pamir frontier, and are both popular with and respected by the hardy highlanders of the vicinity. Between those positions and our bases of supplies, Hazara and the Kashmir valley, there intervene from 100 to 150 miles of sparsely inhabited country, open all the year round, except for two passes which are closed by snow from November until May. Russia, on the other hand, has no locality, within 150 miles of our frontier, in which she can maintain an equally large garrison for more than the four summer months, and that garrison would have to draw all its supplies from the district of Farghana, 300 miles distant, along a route with a mean elevation of 10,000 feet, and further obstructed by several passes, all closed for half the year or more.

Security of India on the Pamir side.

The fact is, that the approaches to India from any point north-east of Badakhshan are physically impracticable for the passage of troops, — except possibly by the lofty Dorah (14,500 feet) and Boroghil (12,460 feet) passes; and the defence of such approaches would presumably have been left

to nature, but for the belief that had we not occupied the Gilgit-Chitral line, Russia would have gained a footing in those countries, and commanded the Dorah and Boroghil passes, now in our hands, the latter of which is, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson,[1] "the only pass in the whole of the range [Hindu Kush] from Herat to the extreme limit of Tibet at all adapted to the passage of an army." As it is, Russia has been anticipated, and should she be so foolish as to attempt to establish permanent military posts of any strength south of the Murghab river, she will be simply wasting money.

II. AFGHAN TURKESTAN AND HERAT.

Geography and ethnology of Afghan Turkestan.

Now, leaving the Pamir region and journeying down the Panjah stream, accepted in 1873 as the Upper Oxus, we pass into Badakhshan, and crossing the Kokcha river, enter Afghan Turkestan at its most northern town of Kunduz,[2] and push 100 miles westward to Mazār-i-Sharif, which has replaced Balkh as the capital and political centre of the northern half of the province. Ethnically and historically, Afghan Turkestan is more connected with Bokhara than with Kabul, of which Government it has been a dependency for only the last thirty years. However, by the Agreement of 1873 it was finally

[1] Proceedings R.G.S., February 24, 1873.

[2] Kunduz is, or lately was, in the government of Badakhshan, but is fifty miles south of the Kokcha stream.

recognised, after long diplomatic doubt, as appertaining to Kabul. Its western boundary, loosely described in that Agreement as the desert "belonging to the independent tribes of Turkomans," was delimited in 1885-87 by a joint Anglo-Russo-Afghan Commission. The whole territory, from the junction of the Kokcha with the Oxus on the north-east to Herat on the south-west, measures about 500 miles, whilst from the demarcated Turkoman frontier on the north-west to the watershed of the Hindu Kush the average breadth is 200 miles. It thus comprises about 100,000 square miles, or, roundly, two-fifths of political Afghanistan. The country north of the Sufed Koh forms part of the basin of the Oxus. Except in the river valleys, it is a poor territory, rough and mountainous towards the Hindu Kush, but subsiding into undulating wastes and pasture-lands towards the Turkoman desert. A large part of the face of the country is closely seamed by the buttresses or spurs of the Hindu Kush, each intermediate valley supporting a small population, congregated in and around some dilapidated town or walled village formerly the centre of a State or Khanate, sometimes independent and sometimes owing allegiance to Bokhara.

Political history.

Of those Khanates the three northern and most adjacent to the Oxus—Balkh, Khulm (now Tash Kurghan), and Kunduz—belonged in this century to Bokhara, until annexed by the great Amir shortly before his death in 1863. The sovereignty over Andkhui Shibarghān, Sir-i-pul, and Maimana—ruin-

ous towns farther west and south-west towards the Turkoman desert—was in dispute between Bokhara and Kabul, until settled by the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1873 in favour of our client. It is worth noting here that, although it is generally believed in England and India that both in 1873 and in 1885-87 Russia was unscrupulously grasping, and in point of fact bested us, the truth seems to be that on both occasions Afghanistan received all she could reasonably claim of the debatable territory.

The 1885-87 joint Commission, memorable for the "Panjdeh incident," delimited the Afghan-Turkoman boundary for 350 miles from Khwaja Salar on the Oxus between Balkh and Bokhara, to the Zulfikar pass, the trijunction point between Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan. The line is laid through an open sparsely occupied desert, of little use to man except as an occasional pasturage. It follows no natural features, as hardly any exist; and would be unidentifiable but for the pillars set up by the Commissioners, many of which pillars have doubtless already disappeared. The population of Afghan Turkestan, which may aggregate three-quarters of a million, though sometimes estimated at a higher figure, is mostly agricultural, settled in and around decayed towns and villages. There are also many thousands of nomads, scattered as shepherds pasturing their flocks and herds on hill or plain according to season. The bulk of the people are of Persian and Uzbeg stock, but interspersed with them are Turkomans, Mongol Hazaras, and even Hindus: The 1885-87 delimitation.

the latter are mostly petty traders, with shops in the towns.

How held by Afghanistan.

The whole are easily held in subjection by small garrisons of Afghans, between which domineering nationality and the people of the country there is no bond of sympathy. The Afghans are there as conquerors; the people are merely the servants of their alien masters. Naturally the country would prefer the Russian to the Afghan yoke, and would welcome the soldiers of the Tzar, did circumstances induce Russia to risk war with England and cross her present Rubicon. Ishâk Khan's unsupported rebellion in 1888, organised in Balkh and Maimana, was nearly successful, although Russia stood throughout it strictly and honourably neutral. Had she, instead, given the rebels the same measure of support —money, arms, and sympathy—as the Government of India bestowed upon the Amir, Ishâk Khan would have probably detached his province from Kabul, and induced Herat also to strike a blow for freedom, or more probably a change of master.

Ripe for annexation by Russia should we permit it.

So weak is the hold of the Amir on his trans-Hindu-Kush dependency, that should Russia at any time overstep the boundary line and occupy Balkh and Maimana, we may fairly presume that the annexation of the whole of the province up to the Hindu Kush would be peaceably accomplished in a few weeks. Should the Afghan garrisons resist, they would be slaughtered and driven out as at Panjdeh with the greatest ease. By a little diplomacy, a liberal distribution of roubles, Russia can

at any time foment a rebellion in the Amir's disaffected dependency, and can next move a couple of battalions as "military police" into it on the pretext of preventing the spread of disorder into her own territory. She is thus in a position — so far as Afghan resistance alone is concerned — to annex, when it suits her, the whole country between her present Oxus and Turkoman border and the Hindu Kush. By such a move she would—were her action condoned by us—go far towards obtaining, at small cost to herself, that ideal conterminous frontier with India which has long been one of the declared objects of her statecraft. As General Sobolev, Chief of the Asiatic Department at St Petersburg, has remarked, "It is in the logic of facts that the Hindu Kush, the natural boundary of India, should shortly form the frontier of Russia, and that the province of Herat should fall into Russia's hands."

Will England fight Russia should that Power occupy Afghan Turkestan?

It is difficult to see how England can prevent the realisation of the Russian part of that dogmatic forecast of Russia's Central Asiatic destiny. It is reasonable to presume that it will become a *fait accompli* should a conjuncture favourable to its execution occur. When Russia makes the move, England will certainly bluster and may ultimately fight. She would in the first place appeal to treaties and engagements, while India would, as in 1885, prepare for war. Eventually, should Russia, after months of diplomatic fencing, find that we were in earnest, and meant war with her all over the world, she would probably withdraw her "military

police" within her treaty frontier limits and watch for her next opportunity. If, on the other hand, she should find that England was unable or unwilling to go to war with her, she would sit tight and recommend us to advance our frontier to hers. Did we do so, many think that the Indo-Russian question would be solved in a way which would suit Russia, but would be financially exhausting for India. It is the impracticability, except at immense cost, of directly protecting Afghan Turkestan against occupation by Russia, that makes our guarantee to maintain the integrity of political Afghanistan such a serious responsibility for us.

Herat indefensible by us.

Our position as regards safeguarding Herat to Afghanistan is even more unsatisfactory. Were we to follow Sir Henry Rawlinson's advice and garrison Herat ourselves on behalf of the Amir, as lessees of the province or otherwise, the expense would be intolerable for India, and the move would exasperate Russia and might precipitate the contest for exclusive dominion—if China be not reckoned—in Asia between us. The fortified town of Herat lies near the Persian end of the valley of the Hari Rud river, 350 miles west of Kabul, and only 55 miles, as the crow flies, from Tut Darakht, the nearest pillar on the Russo-Afghan boundary line, and 170 miles from Chacha, the nearest railway station on the Trans-Caspian line. The valley itself runs east and west for over 200 miles, is rich and easily irrigable, but, owing to misrule, is, considering its capabilities, poorly cultivated and thinly inhabited.

The population, variously estimated at from half a million to a million, is largely Iranian, of the Shia persuasion, and Parsivân or Persian-speaking. The majority of the inhabitants of mixed extraction are congregated under the collective appellation of the Chahâr-Aimâks, or the four tribes. There are also Hazara Mongols and others, a heterogeneous collection, all alien to the Afghans. The master of Herat is also master of the whole valley and adjacent tracts. Herat is the frontier town between India and Persia, and connected by converging caravan-tracks with the capitals of all the surrounding countries: with Kabul through the Hajârajât, physically a difficult route for the Amir's troops because of its mountainous character, but valuable from the fact that the Hazaras occupying it are subjects and peaceful; with Balkh and Bokhara through Maimana; and with Khiva through Merv. It is, moreover, in direct communication with Mashhad, Ispahân, and Kandahar; indeed, so easy are all the caravan-tracks that it is credibly asserted that a good whip could drive a four-in-hand from any one of these places to Herat. Many people think that, properly defended, the town and citadel would be almost impregnable, as its earthworks, dating from prehistoric times, and since renewed and strengthened by each successive conqueror, are colossal in height and thickness. But the fact is, that as a fortress it is no better than Geok Tepe. To make it strong, new defence-works, scientifically constructed, would be necessary.

Predominance of Russian influence in Northern Persia.

We have twice, in 1838 and again in 1856, gone to war in order to detach Herat from Persia. On both of these occasions Persia, in seizing or attempting to seize the town, was acting at the instigation of Russia, whose influence has been dominant in the Shah's councils since the peace of Turkomanchi (1829),—an influence converted into indirect supremacy by the completion, in 1888, of the Trans-Caspian railway, which skirts Persia's northern frontier for 300 miles. That railway has practically reduced the whole of Persia's northern province of Khorasan into a Russian dependency. Its population, if not already entirely pro-Russian, is at least wholly anti-Persian, and impatient for a change of masters. The Shah's nerveless misrule, under which life and property are never secure, taxation spasmodically ruinous, and officials universally corrupt and oppressive, is more exasperating to a weak but high-spirited people than the Tzar's orderly despotism, under which men can at least grow rich and enjoy their own in peace. Did Russia determine to risk war with us and seize Herat, she could presumably open the door of its citadel with a golden key, and, having reinforced her weak Trans-Caspian forces, introduce a garrison weeks before India could put a brigade across the Helmand, or the Amir push forward trustworthy troops 100 miles from Kabul or Kandahar. Were Russia once in possession, it would be quixotic to attempt to eject her by direct attack.

III. NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN.

Small size of Northern Afghanistan.

Now turning eastwards towards Kabul, we find that most of the routes between Afghan Turkestan and the capital of the kingdom converge on Bamian. Thence Kabul is approached by the Irak and Shibar passes, which traverse, at a height of about 12,000 feet and 8000 feet respectively, that portion or continuation of the Hindu Kush which is known as Koh-i-Baba. The two passes are from sixty to seventy miles west of the city of Kabul, between which and the Koh-i-Baba lies the Ghorband valley. No Afghan ruler feels himself secure until he holds Bamian, a march or two beyond them, and thus gains for attack or defence access into the countries west of the Hindu Kush. From the capital the limits of Northern Afghanistan are almost visible. From sixty to seventy miles north and north-east, beyond the Kohistan or Hill Country, subject to Kabul, is the confused mass of the Hindu Kush system, amidst the highest recesses of which the Kafirs still maintain a shrinking independence. About the same distance westwards rises the white wall of the Koh-i-Baba, whence the head waters of the Helmand flow southwards for 700 miles, until lost in the Seistan swamp. Eastwards is the valley of the Kabul river, nature's highroad *viâ* Jalalabad and Peshawar to India. On that side, at a limit of about 100 miles, the Sufed Koh (White Mountains) and the watershed of their northern con-

tinuation between the Kunar and Panjkora rivers separate Afghanistan from India's political frontier. South and south-west the eye fails to see the bounds of the northern part of the Amir's kingdom, for ranges and valleys trend in those directions, thus opening up easy lateral communication between the capital and Kandahar. Ghazni, 100 miles south of Kabul, may be accepted as indicating the southern limit of Northern Afghanistan, although the winter settlements of some pastoral sections of the Ghilzai tribe extend almost to the neighbourhood of Kandahar. Thus, at the outside, Northern Afghanistan contains 35,000 square miles, distributed between the basins of the upper Helmand and Kabul rivers. Of the whole area, perhaps one-tenth may be valley—often little better than the stony beds of rivers and hill torrents—whilst the rest is mountain.

Inhabitants.

The population numbers from two to three millions—as estimates vary greatly. Probably half are Afghans or Pathans—that is, belong to fighting tribes whose mother-tongue is Pashto. The balance is made up of people of Persian stock—Iranians—viz., Kazilbâshes, and the numerous Tajiks, both often loosely included in the term Parsivâns or Persian speakers. The Kazilbâshes are generally men of culture, town residents, and of trading enterprise. Many, owing to their superior intelligence, are employed in the Amir's artillery The Tajiks are correctly descendants of Arab immigrants intermarried with women of the country,

but in common parlance sometimes include all Parsivâns. They are the best cultivators in the country, and entirely subservient to their Afghan masters.

The Ghilzais.

Of the Afghans, the Ghilzais, said to be of Turkish stock but nevertheless thorough Pathans, are in power though not in numbers the strongest tribe in the country. They extend from Kabul itself to Jalalabad and the Sufed Koh on the east, and southwards to Ghazni, and even beyond for some distance down the Tarnak valley, which connects Ghazni with Kandahar. They form a confederacy of tribes, aggregating about a quarter of a million souls, without whose support or acquiescence no Barakzai could reign at Kabul. They are still largely pastoral and nomadic. Although they have never given a sovereign to Kabul, they have done so to Persia.

In 1724 they conquered that country, and devastated it for seven years. They are shepherds, traders, fighters, but not administrators. Their trading branches, congregated under the term Pawindahs, literally "runners"—*i.e.*, men engaged in the carrying trade—are well known in Upper India as Niazais, Nasirs, Kharotis, and Sulimankhels. Many hundreds with thousands of camels visit India each cold weather *viâ* the Gumal route. They were our chief opponents at Ahmad-Khel in 1879. The commercial enterprise of some of their sections is extraordinary. Some of them have even visited Australia with their camels, and are said to have done well there.

Were we to condone the occupation of Afghan

Eventualities with Russia in possession of Afghan Turkestan.

Turkestan by Russia, we should eventually in all probability have to garrison Kabul, Bamian, and Ghazni, thus fulfilling by "the logic of facts" Russia's aim of a conterminous frontier, with herself as the ruler of all the submissive non-Afghan races, and we the protector (?), with or without their consent, of the turbulent and fully armed congeries of highland tribes collectively called Afghans. To maintain our garrisons and keep open our lines of communication with India would be a task which would be a severe strain on the resources of our dependency. We should presumably act with the full consent of the Afghan Government of the day, but even so we should have for some years at least to hold our positions as if they were in an enemy's country. The Afghans are too patriotic, too fanatical, too greedy and needy, to tolerate for any length of time foreign soldiery in their midst as their friendly allies. To gain and retain the goodwill of the tribesmen, we should have to keep them ever convinced that we were their masters, and this would only be possible by the employment of large forces and constant vigilance. A disaster at the front, or even a credible rumour of one at an idle season or at a time of pestilence or scarcity, when men's minds are unusually irritable and credulous, would be the signal for small *émeutes*—ambushing, murdering, and plundering by parties of armed men, and the like—and these might easily be fomented into a general rising against us. The situation has only to be realised to recognise how difficult it

would be. Russia within her new frontier would be comparatively secure at small cost, whereas we behind ours would be insecure, except at an expenditure which would make the continued good government of India impossible. Whether England would relieve the finances of India of some part of the charge is doubtful. The whole subject will be considered in chapters xi.-xiii.

IV. SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN.

General description of Southern Afghanistan.

Now, leaving Kabul, and taking the road to Kandahar, we cross the Sher Dehan gap (9000 feet), descend upon Ghazni, pass our battle-field of Ahmad Khul (1879), and then follow the valley of the Tarnak river for about 150 miles, until finally we reach Kandahar, which is 225 miles S.S.W. of Kabul, and 60 miles north-west of New Chaman, the Kandahar terminus of our Quetta-Peshin railway. We are now at the capital of Southern Afghanistan, a territory stretching from east to west for about 300 miles, and from north to south for 200 miles. Towards Herat, Ghazni, and the Suliman range, the country is rough, dry, and sterile, except in the river valleys. South of Kandahar towards Baluchistan it is a flat desert, and south-west towards the Seistan swamp, in which the Helmand loses itself, it is also desert, except throughout the rich belt of alluvial country irrigated by that river. Of the 60,000 square miles

comprising Southern Afghanistan, three-quarters may be described as plain and valley, and the rest as mountain. Of the former, half may be arable, and of that half probably nine-tenths produce only coarse grass and scrub, if anything. The country is generally fairly easy for locomotion. The caravan route between Kandahar and Herat *vid* Girishk, Farrah, and Sabzwar, might be driven over, so level and devoid of obstacles is it. Sardar Ayub Khan, on his march to Kandahar from Herat in 1880, had no difficulty in following that route with his artillery and baggage, some of which was carried in carts. The village of Maiwand, near which he destroyed General Burrows' army, lies between Girishk and Kandahar, in the centre of the delta of the Helmand and Arghandâb.

Abdali or Durrani tribe.

Of the inhabitants of Southern Afghanistan the Durranis, who are pure-blood Afghans, are supreme along the Helmand, and generally throughout the south and south-west of the country. They were almost unknown in history until the time of their famous chief Ahmad Shah, who changed their tribal cognomen from Abdali to Durrani. They are split up into a number of clans, of whom the Popalzai has the bluest blood. The Sadozai, and latterly the Barakzai branch of the Popalzai clan, has successively given Kabul its ruler. Of the Barakzais the king-giving subsection is the Muhammadzai, whence sprang the famous Amir Dost Muhammad, whose grandson is the present Amir Abdur Rahman

Khan. The Durranis number in all under half a million. They are in possession of the more irrigable half of Southern Afghanistan, including the locally famous Zamindawar tract on the Helmand, which is the heritage of their Alizai branch. Their rivals, and, individually as fighting animals, superiors, the Ghilzais, barely number half as many as the Durranis. The other inhabitants of Southern Afghanistan, including Parsivâns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Aimaks, and miscellaneous nomads, may number a round million. On the whole, the people are orderly and easily governable, and their country is accessible, but backward and undeveloped.

The Helmand.

Its great river, the Helmand, which sweeps in a shallow bed down its centre and south-westwards round its Baluchistan and Persian frontiers, and everywhere invites irrigation, is here hardly tapped by canals. Leaving the mountains of Northern Afghanistan, the Helmand flows south-west for about 150 miles along the eastern border of the rich pastoral district known as Zamindawar, which extends for a width of forty miles westwards of the present course of the river. The mud fort of Girishk is the southern limit of Zamindawar. Forty miles farther south the Arghandâb, after receiving below Kandahar the Tarnak stream, joins the Helmand on its east bank. Thus enlarged the river takes a great sweep westwards, and finally debouches 200 miles farther on into the Seistan swamp. Throughout the lower part of its course

the Helmand only benefits the alluvial lands in its own bed—a strip called Garmsil—which has a width of hardly three miles.

Reclamation of Seistan swamp and district.

Both Seistan and the lower Helmand were once populous and well-cultivated regions, inhabited by peoples of Persian and mixed origins. But Tamarlane in the fourteenth century destroyed the irrigation system and sacked the towns, since which time, owing to the absence of security, and later the encroachments of the domineering Afghans, prosperity has not returned to Seistan and its neighbourhood. The product of the country is camels, but it might be corn and wine, and all that a good soil, abundance of sweet water, and a powerful sun can create. Under a strong benevolent Government, what is now a scene of melancholy desolation might become as a garden, and support a teeming peaceful population. As the Government of India will presumably never undertake the work, it may be that some day a private company will lease Seistan and the valley of the lower Helmand south of Girishk from Shah and Amir, continue the Quetta-Peshin railway from its present terminus at New Chaman *viâ* Kandahar and thence along the Helmand to Seistan, and so open up that potentially splendid but at present malarious country. By such an enterprise a large district would be restored to prosperity, the commercial company might receive fair dividends, and the Indo-Russian question be possibly greatly advanced towards a peaceful solution. Such a scheme, under-

taken however by Government and not by a private company, has been advocated by Mr George Curzon as the "cheapest and the most profitable of all the possible suggestions for counteracting Russian menace to India by pacific and honourable means."[1] Africa, within the British sphere, is being reclaimed by great private companies, with very doubtful prospects of financial success: why then should not Seistan be similarly developed? Its climate, with drainage, would be as good as that of Mashonaland or the lake districts of the Dark Continent, and access to it would be easier. Once the railway was built, orderly colonists from Persia, Afghanistan, and the Panjab would flock into the country. Such an undertaking would have more elements of commercial success in it than any of those now in progress, as much for the regeneration of Africa as for the pecuniary benefit of the philanthropic shareholders in the several companies engaged in carrying out the work of adding a new African empire to our Queen-Empress's dominions.

Girishk the future battle-field between England in India and Russia.

It is an accepted opinion amongst Anglo-Indians interested in the Indo-Russian question that the battle for supremacy in Asia between the two nations will take place "somewhere on the Helmand, probably in the vicinity of Girishk." The idea is due to the belief that Russia will some day seize Herat, and that we, unable to eject her by direct attack, will, as a counter-move, occupy Kan-

[1] Mr George Curzon's 'Russia in Central Asia,' 1889, pp. 379, 380.

dahar, and that as the 400 miles which would still intervene between the rivals is mostly desert, their armies would meet where water and forage are abundant. Those of Mr Curzon's way of thinking would hold that such a contingency would be almost impossible were Seistan connected with India by rail and colonised.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA.

THE EXPANSION OF RUSSIA—BLOCKED IN EUROPE, BUT STILL POSSIBLE IN ASIA—RUSSIA'S TRUE POLICY—CONQUESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA: THEIR POLITICAL OBJECT TO SQUEEZE ENGLAND THROUGH INDIA—ONLY ONE LAND-APPROACH TO INDIA—ROUTES OF INVADERS—ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF RUSSOPHOBIA—CAUSES OF THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR—THE "GREAT GAME" IN AFGHANISTAN—SINDH ANNEXED—DOST MUHAMMAD RESTORED—ASTUTE DIPLOMACY OF RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA—EXHAUSTION AFTER THE CRIMEA—THE CAUCASUS SUBDUED—OUR NON-INTERVENTION POLICY FACILITATES RUSSIAN SCHEMES—CIVIL WAR IN AFGHANISTAN—WE KEEP THE RING—CHANGE OF POLICY—SHER ALI, DISSATISFIED, MAKES A TREATY WITH RUSSIA—PARTY COMPLEXION OF ENGLAND'S POLICY—CAVAGNARI'S MASSACRE AT KABUL—THE RADICALS REVERSE THE CONSERVATIVE POLICY AND ENCOURAGE RUSSIA—PUBLIC OPINION GOES AGAINST THEM—THE "PANJDEH INCIDENT"—RADICAL AND CONSERVATIVE POLICY CONTRASTED.

The peasant expansion movement in Russia.

EVERY educated man knows that Russia has long been, and still is, an expanding Power. In early days the instinct of necessity was the impelling cause for the wandering forth of her people, that of self-interest for their rulers' corrective—serfdom. But serfdom failed to tie the *muzhik* to his miserable home, and so the growth of Russia, though impeded, was never stopped. The movement began in the fifteenth century, and was rather spon-

taneous than State-regulated, until the reign of Peter the Great. In the vast lone forest-lands of the north and west nature passively but ineffectually opposed the human irruption. In the south and south-east nature invited whilst man resisted it. The Steppes were the home of independent nomads, who plundered and murdered all intruders; hence the *muzhik* preferred to seek a new home in the inhospitable north rather than in the temperate south. The difficulty was overcome by the formation of military settlements. Such was the origin of the Cossack colonies of the Don, the Dnieper, and the Volga. To the west and south-west Russia found rivals in Poland and Sweden, as instinctively expansive as herself. In the art of war both of those States were in advance of clumsy, barbaric Russia, until the genius of Peter the Great created a *muzhik* army on the Western model, and enabled him to crush the two Powers who had hitherto lorded it over his people.

Expansion by order only since Peter the Great's time.

From that time the initiative in all territorial acquisition has sprung from the Government, and the people have merely obeyed where formerly they led. When Peter the Great proclaimed that to be a nation Russia must have access to the open sea, he voiced the hitherto vague and inarticulate aspiration of his country. The immediate goals of his ambition were the Baltic and the Black Sea. He only lived to attain the former. It was not until seventy years after his death that Catharine II. achieved the latter. But though Russia is

mistress of the Black Sea, the Turk still stands sentinel at Constantinople, and, supported by the Western Powers, is able to close the Mediterranean against her. On the land side the road to Constantinople is now more blocked than at any previous period in Russia's history. Her position, as territorially and in armed strength the greatest empire in the world, excluded from free access to any perennially open sea in Europe owing to the jealousy of smaller rival nations, is intolerable and almost humiliating. Tenacity of purpose is one of the strongest characteristics of the Slav race; hence, no doubt, Russia will some day achieve her legitimate ambition and become a Mediterranean Power. No doubt, too, so long as the Turk retains a foothold in Europe, Europe's Eastern Question will continue to agitate Cabinets and cause wars and rumours of wars.

Russian extension blocked in Europe, but possible in Asia.

For all practical purposes the further extension of Russia in Europe, except at the cost of hazardous and exhausting wars, is at an end—unless perhaps by directly threatening India she would so intimidate England as to secure that Power's neutrality. Checkmated in Europe for the time, Asia remains open to Russia. In that continent she has apprehensive neighbours — China, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan — but no rival, except England in India, more than a hemisphere from her base. All those neighbours are at present offensively impotent against Russia, and only seek to retain what they still possess. China is still an unwieldy antique

empire struggling against her internal disruptive forces.

Russia's true policy to attack Turkey in Asia Minor only.

Turkey in Asia only exists as such because Russia will persist in attacking Turkey in Europe instead of confining her operations to the Sultan's Asiatic dominions. Were Russia to do so, she would have a free hand from Europe, attain a harbour on the Mediterranean in an easy campaign or two, and by the achievement precipitate the partition of the Turkish empire or reduce it to vassalage—objects unattainable so long as the old policy of direct invasion in Europe is the aim of her statecraft. The whole of Northern Persia, including Khorasan, is already under Russia's domination, ripe for absorption whenever politically advisable. As for Afghanistan, it is India's only remaining buffer against Russia. The part it may play in the future, if the two great rivals for dominion in Asia approach still nearer to each other, is an important factor in the problem of the Indo-Russian question.

Asia open for Russian expansion.

Yes; Asia is open to Russia. She already possesses Siberia, vast, sparsely populated, and in the south rich in soil and in minerals. Though Siberia annually attracts tens of thousands of hardy *muzhik* settlers, she has room and to spare for generations to come for the whole surplus population of Europe. But Russia invites no immigrants except her own people. Circassia too is being gradually peopled by Russian colonists, as the old Muhammadan inhabitants prefer expatriation, and the easy shiftless rule of the head of their faith, to continued residence at

home under the persecuting strictness of their hereditary enemy, the Tzar.

Glancing all round the Russian empire, we find that enormous areas inside its limits are still awaiting population, and that consequently all territorial acquisitions, beyond the limits of effectual colonisation, must be carried through with some political object. In this latter category fall all the annexations made in the last forty years of the quondam Muhammadan States now comprising Russian Turkestan and Trans-Caspiana. These two governments contain three-quarters of a million square miles, an area nearly as large as that of British India, practically all acquired by conquest since the Crimean war. The cost of occupation involves an annual loss to Russia of from ten to fifteen millions of roubles, and is only worth the expenditure, provided that the position held will enable the Tzar, when occasion arises, to bring effective pressure to bear on England through her greatest and most vulnerable possession, India. As Skobeleff repeatedly insisted, "the Asiatic hide is not worth the tanning, unless it enables Russia to take seriously in hand the Eastern Question,—in other words, to dominate the Bosphorus."

Russia's acquisitions in Central Asia made to enable her to squeeze England through India.

The gravitation of Russia and England towards each other in Central Asia dates from the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon (1798-1801) at the beginning of this century. Napoleon hoped that by holding Egypt he would thereby facilitate a land attack from the north-west upon India. The Tzar,

The only land-approach to India from the west lies through Afghanistan.

Paul I., as we have seen, in conjunction with Napoleon, prepared a project for a Franco-Russian expedition against India *viâ* Afghanistan. Through that country lay, and will always lie, the only practicable line of invasion. Neither Himalayas nor Pamirs have ever yet been pierced by an army. But Afghanistan, though an inhospitable tract of mountains and deserts, has given admission both to the Aryan races who now inhabit India, and to every subsequent conqueror in historic times, from Alexander the Great to Ahmad Shah. Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English reached India by the sea. The existence of a land route was known to them all, but disregarded, being considered impracticable. The wild Franco-Russian project of 1800 created apprehensions at Calcutta, and caused the Government of India to study the history of invasions of India from Afghanistan.

Route of most invaders of India was *viâ* Kabul, with the Peshawar valley as first objective.

They found that India had been preyed upon at intervals for two thousand years by a succession of conquerors, almost all of whom had first established their rule in Kabul, and starting thence as an immediate base, had entered the Panjab through the Jalalabad-Khyber route alone, or in conjunction with that by the Kurram valley. Alexander the Great (327-325 B.C.), Mahmud of Ghazni (1001-24 A.D.), Chengis Khan (1303), Tamerlane (1398), Babar (1524), Nadir Shah (1739), and Ahmad Shah (1760) had all followed pretty much the same line of advance, and had found no insurmountable difficulties for men or transport animals in the mountains

which lie beyond India's North-Western frontier. Whether Alexander the Great used the Khyber route at all is doubtful. His army was small and well equipped, and Greek settlements were established at points favourable for commerce all along what then constituted the caravan route between Central Asia and Europe. Alexander appears to have worked his way through those colonies and to have approached India *vid* Balkh, Kafiristan, Chitral, and Bajour, a line considerably to the north of the Khyber. Mahmud of Ghazni may also in some of his many expeditions have used the Bolan route in conjunction with others; and it is probable that tribes of Arab stock now settled in the Panjab—as, for instance, the Awans—spread gradually eastwards by an ancient trading route through Makran,[1] which, though now, with the exception of occasional date-palm oases, almost desert, once contained a thriving population, congregated in walled towns and villages along the then highway between the Indian peninsula and southern Persia. With these possible exceptions, all immigrants into India, whether invading hosts or tribal irruptions, have penetrated into the peninsula by its Peshawar entrance.

No conclusions possible from

The ease with which a succession of Musalman invaders had traversed the mountain ranges of

[1] In a letter received August 3, 1894, Colonel Holdich, R.E., C.B., C.I.E., the well-known Superintendent of Indian North-Western Frontier Surveys, says of the "southern highways into India through Makran," "Not all the rest of the passes into India put together have seen the traffic that one of them has, and that traffic lasted for eight centuries. Makran is commanded from the sea fortunately."—S. S. T.

marching feats of Central Asian invaders.

Afghanistan convinced our Government, as it had the Tzar Paul I., that what rude Asiatics did at intervals between 1000 and 1760 A.D., disciplined European troops could also accomplish at a later period. In coming to that conclusion both Tzar and Governor-General failed to realise the difference in the conditions of locomotion between a Central Asian and a modern European army. The former were mounted men, each capable of moving, fully armed and rationed for a week when necessary, thirty or forty miles in a day; whereas the latter, encumbered by its heavy baggage and ordnance, would creep along a few miles daily, and be delayed for bridge or road making by every river, mountain, and pass.

Origin and progress of Russophobia.

Wild and impracticable though the projected invasion of India was in 1800, it inaugurated a new departure in the foreign policy of the Indian empire —a departure which from first to last has, by a series of wasteful missions, alliances, and wars with Persia and Afghanistan, already cost the Indian taxpayers about seventy millions sterling.[1] To

[1] The estimate is made up thus :—

Indian Missions to Persia and Afghanistan from 1800	£500,000
British occupation of the island of Karrak, 1838-42	250,000
First Afghan war, 1838-42	15,000,000
Persian war, 1856-57	5,000,000
India's share of Second Afghan war, 1878-80	20,000,000
Indirect charges connected with the two Afghan wars	10,000,000
Allowance to Afghan refugees capitalised	2,250,000
Afghan Boundary Commission, 1885-87, and preparations for war in 1885	3,000,000
North-Western frontier defence-works	5,000,000
Increase of Indian army, due to advance of Russia towards our North-Western frontier	10,000,000
	£71,000,000

counteract the influence of France and safeguard India, Malcolm's costly Mission was sent to the Shah of Persia in 1800, and followed by others in 1808 and 1817-18.

With the fall of Napoleon all fear of France as our rival in India passed away. Meanwhile a newer and graver danger was believed to have risen. Since Paul I.'s abortive project, Russia had been steadily undermining the power of both Turkey and Persia. By posing as the disinterested liberator of oppressed but orthodox nationalities—a *rôle* twice subsequently played by Russia with disastrous consequences to herself—she for a time cajoled our statesmen into forwarding her schemes of self-aggrandisement. As her ally we destroyed the Turkish fleet in the bay of Navarino in 1827. We thus left Turkey helpless against her hereditary foe, and prepared the way for the treaty of Adrianople two years after. By meddling and muddling at Teheran we caused Russia to declare war against Persia, which resulted in the treaty of Turkomanchi (1829). By that treaty the Tzar gained some valuable provinces, turned the Caspian into a Russian lake, and destroyed the independence of Persia for ever. Those events, together with the steady advance of Russia into the Kirghiz steppes, and her thinly disguised intention of ultimately subjugating the Turkomans and their supporter the Khan of Khiva, revived Anglo-Indian Russophobia.

Causes of the first Afghan war.

The old expedient of missions and treaties of commerce was tried. The independent States between

British India and the Caspian were to be confederated, consolidated, and subsidised as useful buffers against the approach of Russia. The three Khanates of Bokhara, Khiva, and Khokhand were advised to unite their forces in order to prevent their separate extinction. The Tzar's counter-stroke was to instigate the Shah of Persia, now Russia's involuntary ally, to revive his claim to Herat. Supported by the presence of the Russian ambassador to his Court, the Shah invested the coveted fortress, but soon raised the siege and retreated in disorder. That event deprived the Government of India of further pretext for active interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. Unfortunately for India, the then Governor-General was Lord Auckland, a weak and inexperienced man, who owed his appointment to the exigencies of party politics. He was entirely in the hands of an ambitious Simla ring of interested Russophobists, who used him to forward what they called "the great game" in Central Asia. The Herat piece having failed, they decided on a change of programme. India, it was held, was still in danger from the machinations of Russia. The seizure of Peshawar by the Sikhs had reasonably though impotently incensed the Amir against that people. The Sikhs were our allies: might not the Afghan Amir obtain aid from Russia in order to recover his lost province? Had he not shown his audacious independence by receiving a Russian ambassador and negotiating a treaty with him? It was therefore advisable to substitute a subservient for a possibly

hostile ruler. The thought of being handed down in history as a king-maker glamoured Lord Auckland's better judgment. He readily consented to dethrone Dost Muhammad, the able and popular Amir, and replace him by a gentlemanly dreamer and ex-Shah of Afghanistan named Shah Shujah, then a discredited refugee in British territory.

The "great game" in Afghanistan, 1838-42.

And so, in furtherance of the "great game," with a view to "the establishment of a strong, friendly, and independent Power in Afghanistan, as a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression on our North-West frontier,"[1] we invaded Afghanistan (1838), deposed its great Amir, set up our own puppet, attempted to dragoon his subjects into obedience to him, raised consequently the country against ourselves, and finally evacuated it (1842), losing our army in the retreat. The massacre of that army was a just retribution for the iniquity of our intervention, but was due rather to the fatuous imbecility of its general-in-chief than to any bravery in action displayed by the Afghans. To redeem our honour we now hurried an avenging army to Kabul, and having blown up its bazaar—a petty revenge—hastily withdrew from a country which we should never have entered. The "great game" thus cost us an army, fifteen millions sterling in money, and destroyed both our prestige and our good name throughout Central Asia.

We seize Sindh to recover (?) our prestige.

To rehabilitate ourselves before India, and gain a nearer base against Russia, we next picked a quarrel

[1] Lord Auckland's proclamation, October 1, 1838.

with the unoffending Amirs of Sindh, and annexed their country (1843), an infamous proceeding laconically expressed in Sir Charles Napier's epigrammatic summing up, "I have Sindh" (sinned).

Dost Muhammad, restored to the Amirship, distrusts us.

We had meanwhile released Dost Muhammad, who quietly assumed the Amirship as if the preceding four years of anarchy had never occurred. No great English territorial magnate returning from a prolonged Eastern tour could have met with a better reception from his tenantry than did the Amir from his turbulent subjects. For some years he only ruled over Northern Afghanistan—that is, over Kabul and the surrounding districts as far as Kafiristan, the Hindu Kush, and Ghazni, in all not more than 35,000 square miles. His brothers ruled at Kandahar. All the territory beyond the Hindu Kush, now politically included in Afghanistan, was practically independent or owed an uncertain allegiance to Bokhara. Dost Muhammad's treatment by us had taught him, what bitter experience subsequently brought home to his son and successor, Sher Ali, that the less his intercourse with the rulers of India the greater would be his independence in Afghanistan. For seven years after his restoration we left him and his country severely alone. The events of 1838-42 had discredited the forward policy of the Russophobe school; moreover, war with the Sikhs, our late allies, for the sovereignty of the Panjab, was increasingly imminent. We had neither men, money, nor leisure for distant adventures. The Amir, who foresaw the inevitable

contest, and feared its result for his own country, did his best to preserve the Panjab as neutral territory between his kingdom and the expanding boundaries of the insatiable English. When the war broke out he sent 2000 Afghan horse to help the Sikhs, but from want of discipline they were of little use. The Sikhs were finally crushed at the battle of Gujrat (1849) and the Panjab annexed. The Amir now sought to interpose the independent tribes along our new North-Western frontier as buffers between himself and us.

Our buffer policy used against us.

His policy was similar to that which has actuated us since 1800, in consequence of the Russian advance towards India. The buffer, or neutral-zone system adopted by Dost Muhammad against us, and by us against Russia, is, some think, a device of weakness against strength. The width of the zone diminishes with each forward move of the more aggressive, and, as such, presumably stronger Power, and at each stage of contraction the day when the stationary Power must fight or yield comes nearer. We had, however, no real intention of making any further advance westwards, having our hands full with the work of organising the administration of our new acquisition. The belt of sterile mountains beyond our actual frontier, therefore, remained a *terra incognita* for us, much to the gratification of the Amir, who often unsuccessfully instigated the needy fanatical hillmen to give trouble to their new *Faringhi Kâfir* neighbours in the plains. Whenever those highlanders forayed our rich low-

lands, we retaliated by crop-burning counter-raids, or by excluding the offending tribe from intercourse with our people, a punishment sometimes slowly effectual when equivalent to one of gradual starvation.

Astute diplomacy of Russia in Central Asia during the Crimean war period.

Whilst we were occupied with the administration of our last conquest in India, the Tzar, Nicholas I., plunged into a new war with Turkey, and our Home Government into what is known as the Crimean war. As in 1837, Russia again incited the Shah of Persia to revive his claim to Herat, and even to Kandahar. By this astute move the Tzar's ministers calculated that they would involve us in large expenditure, and reduce our effective strength against their master. The policy succeeded. But it also forced the Amir from his position of isolation, induced him to ally himself with us, and caused us to declare war against Persia, as that Power had seized Herat. The war was short and inglorious for Persia. Almost without a fight she agreed to evacuate Herat and renounce all future claim to suzerainty over Herat or Kandahar. Russia, however, had succeeded in effecting her object. She had prevented us from sending troops serving in India to the Black Sea theatre of war, had caused us heavy expenditure, and had still further weakened Persia, and reduced the Shah to greater dependence than previously on herself, and all this by the exercise of a little cheap diplomacy. Russia was, however, in no position to take further advantage of the situation in Central Asia.

Russia's exhaustion in 1857 prevents her from taking advantage of the Sepoy Mutiny.

The Crimean war had fortunately exhausted her for a time, and during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857-58 she was unable to make use of the unique opportunity which it afforded her of a further advance towards India. Had her frontier been then what it is to-day, she might have annexed Herat, or the whole of Afghan Turkestan up to the Hindu Kush, without the risk of more than an ineffectual diplomatic protest from England. The Afghans are foreigners in military occupation of those countries, and will be unable to offer any stubborn resistance against their seizure by Russia, whenever that Power thinks the time propitious for pushing her frontier a little nearer India. Disturbances in some part of our empire, or a weak Government in England, will presumably sooner or later give her that opportunity. However, in 1857-58 Russia was herself weak, and had not then completed the conquest of the Caucasus. Even before she had partially recovered from the paralysis of offensive energy and the disorganisation which followed the fall of Sevastopol, she determined to finally crush the Circassians.

Russia finally subdues the tribes of the Caucasus.

Their subjugation had been undertaken about thirty years previously, and the work had proceeded slowly but steadily, until in 1834 a sort of *Mahdi* named Shamyl (Samuel) united the clans of Daghestan in a holy war against their infidel oppressor. For twenty years these poorly armed highlanders had defied all the clumsy efforts of Russia to destroy them. After the Crimean war

150,000 troops were employed against them. With the capture of their prophet-chief in 1859, all further resistance ended. By the time that the Caucasus had been conquered—a process hastened greatly by the withdrawal of many of its people into Turkish territory — Russia had sufficiently recovered from the effects of the Crimean war to enable her to resume energetically her operations in Central Asia.

Our non-intervention policy gives Russia a free hand in Central Asia from 1860 to 1869.

The Sepoy Mutiny had been suppressed, but its consequences remained—disordered finances, political unrest, and a general want of confidence. It was clear that the reorganisation of our Indian administration would occupy us for some time, and that England, still impressed by our Afghan disaster of 1842, would indorse a non-intervention policy, afterwards so consistently championed by Lord Lawrence, the "Jân Lârans Sâhib" of the Panjab, who was the third Viceroy of India from 1863 to 1869. England's difficulty must always be Russia's opportunity. Here then was a favourable conjuncture for action—India embarrassed, England indifferent. Russia grasped the situation and took full advantage of it. Between 1860 and 1869 she overran and annexed most of the countries now called Russian Turkestan. During those years we had, in pursuance of our non-intervention policy, left Afghanistan severely alone. The great Amir, Dost Muhammad Khan, had died in 1863, only a few days after he had recovered Herat and reunited Eastern and Western Afghanistan under his rule.

He had done what he could to secure the peaceable succession of Sher Ali, his third and most capable son. Lord Canning had in 1858 formally recognised Sher Ali as heir-apparent, but had declined to commit the Government to a promise of giving him material support in the probable event of a contested succession. That decision embittered the last years of Dost Muhammad's life against us. He had stood our friend throughout the dark days of the Mutiny, and all he asked in return was that at his death a few lakhs of rupees and some thousands of rifles should be given to his selected heir. That small request had been refused. And so the great Amir died a few days after he had consolidated his kingdom by the reconquest of Herat.

We keep the ring while Dost Muhammad's sons fight out a war of succession.

Sher Ali at once notified his succession to the Government of India, and solicited a supply of arms and money. After a delay of some months a cold official acknowledgment of his letters was sent to him, coupled with the intimation that no help could be given to him—he and his brothers must fight out the quarrel themselves: the best man would be recognised as *de facto* ruler of Afghanistan or part of it, as the case might be. Thus instigated, the great Amir's sons threw themselves into the struggle, the Government of India metaphorically keeping the ring, and occasionally encouraging one or other competitor with a friendly letter. Such was the policy of "masterly inactivity" steadily pursued by Lord Lawrence during his Viceroyalty. All that can be said in its favour is, that it cost India noth-

ing, and thus saved us some expenditure at a time when money was scarce, whereas the old "mischievous activity" of the forward school had lost us our honour, our prestige, and many millions sterling. For five years Dost Muhammad's sons contended for the Amirship. At the end of that time Sher Ali emerged victorious, Amir of Afghanistan—a fact at once acknowledged by the Government of India.

Change of policy in England due to Russia's advance to the Oxus and success of Sher Ali.

The long-delayed recognition had been hastened by a change of policy due to a revival of Russophobia in England and India, and the cogency of the arguments against non-interference urged by Sir Henry Rawlinson and others. Our statesmen had suddenly been awakened from their self-complacency by the discovery that whilst they had slept, Russia had pushed forward her frontier to the Oxus. In such a position the new Amir naturally hesitated whether he should come to terms with Russia or seek an offensive and defensive alliance against her with England. He dreaded Russia, but distrusted us, as well he might. He remembered how in 1857, in the hour of India's need, his father had restrained his people and their compatriots on our frontier from attempting to reconquer Peshawar and from attacking our attenuated garrisons all down our Trans-Indus strip of territory. In return for that service we had, in his hour of need, refused him money or arms, had left him for five years, from 1863 to 1868, to fight it out with his brothers, and finally, when he had, unaided, recovered his kingdom, had selfishly acknowledged him as Amir,

because he was ruler of Afghanistan, and powerful for offence should he prefer a Russian to an English alliance. On the whole, he decided to try the latter: the new Viceroy might have a more imperial mind than either of his predecessors. The resolve taken, he left Kabul in the spring of 1869, and journeyed from Peshawar by carriage *dak* 450 miles into India to Umballa. There he met Lord Mayo, and proposed an offensive and defensive alliance to him. Instead of being guaranteed the integrity of his kingdom against Russian aggression in clear and unmistakable terms, he was merely promised conditional help in money and arms, "as circumstances would seem to require." Such temporising convinced him that we too either feared Russia, or had come to secret terms with her, and would join her at a suitable time in partitioning his kingdom. He returned to Kabul a suspicious and disappointed man.

Sher Ali, dissatisfied, makes terms with Russia.

In 1873, when Russia took Khiva, his alarm once more induced him to appeal to us. He again and again besought the then Viceroy (Lord Northbrook) to give him some guarantee of the integrity of his kingdom. He was told, in effect, that such a proposal could only be considered were he to renounce his independence and accept the position of a feudatory like Kashmir or Hyderabad. In wrath and despair he now turned wholly to Russia, with whom he had already been occasionally exchanging friendly messages. The Tzar, at least, knew his own mind, and had the power and will to protect Afghanistan

until he should see fit to annex it. Russia met his renewed advances with satisfactory answers, sympathised with his grievances, and skilfully fomented his sense of bitterness against us. She was herself at the time slowly drifting into a new war with Turkey; hence in every case it was wisdom to delude the now credulous Amir with promises of help, and so commit him to an act of hostility against us. Promises cost neither men nor money. Twice before they had brought about a war to India's loss and Russia's gain, and all at the price of a few empty words. So a Russian Mission was sent to Kabul, and a treaty of alliance arranged, in consequence of which the Amir defied us. The Tzar was his friend and protector now, not the shifty selfish English. India at once prepared for war. When it became apparent in England that the Disraeli Cabinet intended to force a war or submission on the Amir, the late Lord Lawrence, supported by other leaders of public opinion, endeavoured to rouse the nation to a sense of the injustice and uselessness of repeating the 1838 mistake. In a series of letters to the 'Times,' published in October and November 1878, Lord Lawrence implored his countrymen to interpose between the Government and their determination. With clear prevision of the issue, he warned the nation that the only results of a war would be an enormous expenditure and a legacy of Afghan hate against us.

Afghan war of 1878-80.

Our people, however, were indifferent: it was an affair for India to settle; India, not England, would

have to pay the cost of the adventure. So Afghanistan was invaded as in 1838, and the ill-starred Amir, Sher Ali, forced to flee from his capital, as his father had done before him. Disappointed in his expectations of aid from Russia, he soon after died in exile, cursing his great neighbours for again destroying his kingdom. England he execrated for the weak shiftiness of her policy, Russia he must almost have admired for her splendid mendacity. Upon his death his son Yakub Khan was proclaimed Amir. We had no quarrel with him, and were as anxious to evacuate his country as he to expedite our departure.

Treaty hastily concluded to vindicate Conservative policy at the coming elections.

A treaty was hastily arranged and signed at Gandamak, by which we obtained the newly discovered "scientific frontier." Our forces were now rapidly withdrawn. Both treaty and evacuation were hurried through to suit party exigencies in England. The Radicals were in Opposition; hence, the conduct of foreign affairs being still to some extent a party question, they condemned whatever the Conservatives did or attempted to do. The Opposition had, consequently, and perhaps also from honest conviction as well, opposed the Afghan war, and the advance of the Indian frontier to its "scientific" limit. Elections for a new Parliament were impending. The Conservatives believed that unless the wisdom of their Afghan policy was at once made plain to the constituencies, their opponents might obtain an easy victory at the polls. It was necessary, therefore, that the party in power should

be able to go to the country with the announcement that Afghanistan was now strong and contented under an Amir, who was for the first time in history guided in all matters of external policy by the advice of a resident English Envoy. Lord Lytton responded to the call of his party-chiefs with alacrity, and decided to carry out the programme laid down for him at once. He selected the ill-fated Cavagnari for the post of honour and danger at Kabul, and wished him to start without delay.

Massacre of the English Envoy at Kabul, with all his staff and escort.

Both Amir and Envoy-elect demurred: the Afghans would resent the presence of an Englishman at Kabul; the late war had roused their fanaticism against us; the country was still disturbed; the rule of the new Amir still weak; let the execution of the Viceroy's will be deferred for six months, by which time things would be more settled. Lord Lytton would not listen to reason; he knew the risk, but for the sake of his party determined to run it; after all, the chances were in favour of success; the Afghans had formerly treated Burnes and other Englishmen as honoured guests; the Amir and his subjects knew that the person of an Envoy was sacred; they would at least respect Cavagnari as the accredited representative of England; his ability and liberality would soon convert respect into esteem. And so Cavagnari and his escort were sent to their doom. For a few weeks all went well; the Conservative press was jubilant, and even old Frontier Officers began to scan the daily telegrams in the Lahore paper with less fore-

boding of disaster than before: after all, things might go well, and if they did, why, Cavagnari would rise above his reputation. As a Trans-Indus Deputy Commissioner he had never been a year in a district without having a frontier row, but as England's responsible representative at Kabul, the impetuous fearlessness of his nature might have been sobered into strong tactful prudence; so "All is well" was the daily report, with a changeless and curt iteration which was itself suspicious; if all was well, why was news so meagre? Then came a day or two of silence, and then—the night! Envoy, staff, and escort had been massacred in an *émeute*, Amir and his officers looking helplessly on.

Abdur Rahman made Amir.

Then once more all was hurry and flurry in the Panjab. An avenging army was pushed on to Kabul, the Amir deported to India, the onset of the fanatical tribes repulsed, Burrows destroyed at Maiwand by Ayub Khan, the youthful conqueror soon afterwards defeated at Kandahar, and finally Abdur Rahman, the refugee pensioner of Russia, eldest grandson of the great Amir Dost Muhammad, invited by us to Kabul, put on the throne, arms and stores handed over to him—after which, for the third time in forty years, Afghanistan was evacuated.

The Radicals reverse the Conservative policy to placate Russia.

In Opposition the Radicals, as already stated, condemned the Afghan policy of their rivals. In power they reversed it, withdrew from Kandahar, and "precipitately abandoned" the railway to Quetta and Peshin, then under construction. Their

wish was to placate Russia, whose "irritability it was imperative to soothe," as Mr Wyllie, their apologist, put it. They also, perhaps, sought to discredit Lord Beaconsfield. They partially succeeded. Russia was placated by Mr Gladstone's gullibility. A woodcut, which was popular in Russia, aptly caricatured the situation. It represented two feet, one English-shod stepping off land marked "Afghanistan," the other in a big Russian boot hastening the departure. The Conservatives bided their time, foreseeing the inevitable *dénoûment*. They had not long to wait.

Russia hastens to push on her Trans-Caspian railway, and annexes Merv and Sarakhs.

Safe from interference from England so long as the Radicals were in power, Russia now defeated and massacred the Turkomans at Geok Tepe (1881), and pushed on the construction of her Trans-Caspian railway. The Gladstonian Cabinet was warned that Merv was the objective, and advised to complete the abandoned Quetta-Peshin railway. But Mr Gladstone was obstinate, occupied with his home measures, and had no time for distant foreign politics. He preferred to believe Russian assurances: that great civilising Power had merely chastised Turkoman man-stealers, and would neither annex their profitless deserts nor lay a mile of iron road east of Kizil Arvat. Promises notwithstanding, Turkomania was annexed and the railway was continued eastward towards Merv, and when all was ready Merv herself was, in compliance with the prearranged petition of some of her leading men, admitted within the limits of the Russian empire.

The news staggered the Gladstonians, but did not convince their leader of Russia's bad faith. Explanations were awaited, but were, of course, delayed until a crowning stroke — the seizure of Sarakhs—was accomplished.

Russia was now within easy striking distance of Herat, and dominated Mashhad. A little complacence now on her part might keep the Gladstonian party in power for use on a future occasion. She consequently graciously agreed to the appointment of an Anglo-Russian Frontier Delimitation Commission to fix the common boundary of Russia and Afghanistan from Sarakhs to the Oxus at Khwaja Salar. She, however, had no intention of permitting the Commission to begin work until she had taken possession of Panjdeh, after which, having all she wanted, the boundary might be laid on the principle of *beati possidentes*. Accordingly she kept our Commission waiting on the boundary line for months, whilst she exchanged diplomatic conundrums with the English Cabinet and collected forces to turn the Afghans out of Panjdeh. The effrontery of the seizure of Sarakhs had roused public indignation in England. Some members of Mr Gladstone's Cabinet began to be uneasy that, after all, Russia had played with their credulity. The electorate were already sure of it. To allay the popular outcry, permission was now hastily given to the Government of India to recommence work on the Quetta-Peshin railway. Permission conceded from fear of the electorate might be with-

The Radicals constrained to change their policy.

drawn from fear of Russia. The Indian Government, therefore, rushed the work, and consequently did it badly and wastefully.

The "Panjdeh affair" and Afghan Boundary Commission.

Meanwhile, all being in train on the Afghan frontier, Russia effected her final *coup* on March 30, 1885, by turning the Afghans out of Panjdeh, and shooting down some six hundred of them in the unequal fight. The bloody treachery of the act roused all England, and even Mr Gladstone himself became tardily warlike. However, as Russia had calculated, the matter was easily arranged. She retained Sarakhs and Panjdeh and a *uti possidetis* boundary. Her new frontier, as delimited in 1885-87, enables her to seize Herat or Maimana by a *coup de main* whenever she may think a suitable conjuncture for another advance towards India has presented itself. The "Panjdeh affair" or "incident," as it has been variously called, cost the taxpayers of India about two millions sterling; for whilst England blustered and did nothing, India prepared energetically for war. The Gladstonian Ministry fell in the following year, giving place, after two temporary changes, for the next six years to that of Lord Salisbury.

Radical and Conservative policy contrasted.

The news of the decisive victory of the Conservatives was a relief to all well-wishers of English rule in India. It meant that Russia would cease from troubling, and that India would have a rest from the drain and uncertainty of a vacillating Home Government, whose foreign policy was a mixture of concessions and bluster. In home politics a

Gladstonian Ministry is avowedly the servant of the masses, whereas a Conservative Ministry would lead them. The former holds that the duty of Government is to be governed, the latter that it is to govern. Thus in effecting changes the former acts impulsively, uncertainly, sweepingly; the latter, when strong, with the constructive slowness of evolution observable in the natural world. In the management of foreign and colonial affairs, the difference between the two great rival parties was until lately still more marked. The Gladstonian aims were parochial, the be-littlement of England, the contraction of responsibility outside the parish; but the Conservatives were Imperialists, promoters of a Great Britain at home and a Greater Britain abroad wherever English is the mother-tongue. It follows, then, that Anglo-Indians, by nature pugnacious, by self-interest lovers of an active policy, and from foreign travel Imperialists, proud of their country's world-wide possessions, prefer the foreign and colonial policy of a Conservative to that of a Gladstonian Ministry. When in July 1886 the decisive defeat of the Gladstonians gave the promise of a long lease of power to their Conservative rivals, the feeling of relief in India was genuine and universal both amongst Anglo-Indians and the best-informed natives. As a fact, for the next six years Russia ceased from further aggression or interference in Afghanistan, raised no new frontier disputes, and observed a strict neutrality during Ishak Khan's rebellion in Afghan Turkestan. She

employed that period of compulsory inactivity in consolidating her position on the Afghan frontier, and preparing for new adventures when the return swing of the political pendulum in England should restore the Gladstonians to power. That event was foreseen before the close of 1891, but did not actually take place until July 1892. Whether in anticipation of the fall of the Salisbury Ministry, or as a set-off for our annexation of Hunza and Nagar, Russia, in the summer of 1891, seized territory in the Pamir region with a view to the future acquisition of Roshan and Shignan, and in the following summer repeated her Panjdeh tactics at Somatash by massacring the small Afghan garrison of that outpost. The Pamir question is still (September 1894) undecided.

CHAPTER IX.

ADMINISTRATION OF OUR NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER.

STATES IN THE EAST—RISE OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY—OUR DOMINION IN THE PANJAB—FEELING OF THE PANJABIS ABOUT US—OUR NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER—LARGE POWERS OF EARLY LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS—THE PESHAWAR AND DERÁJÁT DIVISIONS—DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF FRONTIER ADMINISTRATION—TREATMENT OF BORDER OFFENCES—FRONTIER EXPEDITIONS ON HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES INEFFECTUAL—TWO "LITTLE WARS"—IMPROVEMENT IN FIREARMS—EFFECT OF THE BREECH-LOADER ON THE TRIBES—CRITICISM ON EXPEDITIONS CONDUCTED ON EXETER HALL LINES—*DELENDA EST CARTHAGO* PRINCIPLE THE BEST IN SAVAGE WARFARE—THE RUSSIAN SYSTEM—SOME UNNECESSARY EXPEDITIONS—INCREASED ATTENTION TO FRONTIER ADMINISTRATION—THE PANJAB GOVERNMENT'S ANSWER TO THE CHARGE OF INDIFFERENCE—REASONS AGAINST A FRONTIER CHIEF COMMISSIONERSHIP—COST OF THE AFGHAN WAR, 1878-80—REFORMS IN FRONTIER ADMINISTRATION—BORDER DEFENCE—RESULTS OF NEW FRONTIER POLICY.

States in the East.

Now, leaving Russia and Afghanistan for a time, let us pass lightly over our own *raison d'être* in India, but consider in some detail our position on our North-Western frontier. Like Russia, we are a great expanding Power, but, unlike her, we now wish to advance no farther westwards, because we have already seized and assimilated whatever was worth having, and find that it is to our advantage to keep a large area of sterile country as a buffer State between our rich and valuable Indian

dependency and the formidable military empire which seeks in her own interests to make her frontier conterminous with ours. The progress of expansion in Asia has been made easy for both England and Russia by the fact that in the East States are one-man Powers, whereas in the West they are automatically-working machines.

In all Eastern countries a personal ruler is indispensable. He governs as if he were immortal. Given longevity and luck, he attains greatness, makes his friendship prized, his enmity dreaded, and keeps his people contented, or at least quiet. If his country's luck survive his death, a capable successor ascends the throne without a contest, and the State may grow into an empire. Such was the case with Baber, the conqueror of Hindustan, whose grandson Akbar, the consolidator of the Moghal empire, was our Queen Elizabeth's contemporary. But great men rarely have great sons; hence in the East, when death removes the founder or sustainer of a kingdom, a scramble for power generally ensues, and ends in temporary dismemberment, or victory for the fittest competitor. In both cases the country is for a time reduced to comparative impotence, and falls an easy prey to a strong aggressor should one appear. Such being the normal course in Asiatic States, the disruption of the Moghal empire, which may be held to date from Aurangzeb's death in 1707, dissolved India into a number of small principalities, the strength of each depending on the ability of its ruler.

Rise of the East India Company.

In India a strong aggressor was at hand in the company of English traders established at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. One after another, each State, whether ruled by Maharaja, Raja, Peshwa, Nawab, or degenerate descendant of the great Moghal, succumbed to the genius for organisation of the East India Company's officers, until finally, after the death of Ranjit Sing, the Sikh confederation, now without a head, blundered into war with their great neighbour. After a tough contest, that masterful people admitted themselves beaten, and cheerfully turned their practical minds to husbandry, and fighting for their late conqueror whenever, as in the Mutiny, an opportunity for active service presented itself. As the successors of the Sikhs, we took over all territory which they had conquered.

Our dominion in the Panjab.

Their dominion had been pushed far beyond the limits of the Panjab plains, up north over Kashmir and the mountains of British Hazara, westwards over the Peshawar and Kohat valleys, and generally Trans-Indus to the very foot of the sterile Suliman range, and its connected hills, which stretch in a continuous wall for 300 miles from the Kurram river into Baluchistan.

Feeling of the Panjabis about English rule.

The Panjabis took kindly to their new masters. The Musalmans of the Western Panjab, on whom the Sikh tyranny had been heavy, welcomed the English as deliverers; whilst the Jats, Rajputs, and even Sikhs of the rest of the province, weary of generations of strife and confusion, gratefully ac-

cepted the new order, as a change from darkness to light. The Panjabi, whether Musalman or Hindu, though on occasion as fond of a row as any Irishman, is a model peasant and subject.

The hurly-burly of the military despotism of the Sikhs was galling to him, because that fighting commonwealth reduced all degrees and classes into one common denomination of taxpayers. We restored the village system, re-established the ancient order of society, conciliated by liberal treatment the people's leaders and priesthood, and by an impartial yet sympathetic administration of justice gained the confidence of all classes. Thus our new acquisition soon became a thoroughly loyal province, and proved its gratitude by standing firm in its allegiance during the ordeal of the Mutiny.

Our North-Western frontier.

The frontier tracts had early been broken up into compact districts, grouped into two divisions, the Northern called Peshawar, and the Southern the Deráját. The former comprised the districts of Hazara, Peshawar, and Kohat; the latter those of Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan. Each division was administered by a Commissioner, and each district by a Deputy Commissioner, also called District Officer. Of those six districts Hazara alone lay Cis-Indus. British authority was generally confined to the lowlands, and stopped abruptly at the foot of the great mountain-wall which formed a buffer between India and the kingdom of the restored Amir of Kabul. Inside our territory were settled communities of peasant cultivators living in fixed

villages, mostly bigoted yet peacefully inclined Muhammadans. Beyond, to the farther west, all was "Yâghistán," "the place of no government." To the needy highlanders the lowland villages had from time immemorial been a happy hunting-ground. Marauding bands from the hills were always on the watch to kidnap unwary Hindus and hold them to ransom, to swoop down on cattle if their armed escorts were weak or careless, to rush a hamlet when opportunity offered, and individually or collectively to do the work of hired assassins for any plainsman unable by other means to compass the death of an enemy and willing to pay for the job. The systems by which life and property were gradually rendered comparatively secure along a difficult border extending for 600 miles from Kaghân in Hazara to the Sindh border were not uniform.

Large powers of our early Civil Administrators on the frontier.

Our Civil Officers were everywhere few, isolated, and engrossed in the work of organising a civil administration for the unruly tribes within their respective jurisdictions — in short, in creating order out of chaos. In those early days, too, and indeed until well into the seventies, it was a far cry to Lahore; hence no close supervision could be exercised by the central authorities over their distant Trans-Indus Officers. All that the local Government could do was to send to those outlying districts—each as big as half-a-dozen English counties, with a population described afterwards in successive annual reports as "generally criminal"—the pick of its young officers, most of them subalterns or recently made

captains, who had distinguished themselves in the late war with the Sikhs. Thus the evolution of a frontier system depended primarily on the idiosyncrasies of the two Commissioners of Peshawar and the Deráját, but particularly on the personal characters of the local executive. Once a principle had been prescribed, the shaping of our actual relations with the trans-border tribes was the result of the individual action of the different District Officers, each one of whom was a little autocrat inside his own dominion.

Frontier management in the Peshawar division.

In the Northern division a custom grew up of dealing with the border tribes through the leading native gentleman of each neighbourhood concerned. Such middlemen were naturally more careful of their own immediate interests than of those of the Government. Their horizon was of course very restricted. All then had narrow views, and many had actual or possible rivals to thwart, or old grudges or blood-feuds to wipe out. In practice most of these irresponsible native politicals were rather indifferent than actively mischievous. Ambitious exceptions were not slow to perceive that, by alternately exasperating and then pacifying their touchy charges, they both enhanced their own importance in the eyes of the Government, and took the course most likely to end in an increase to their emoluments. This sort of game was sometimes successful when too great reliance was placed by the local officers on the straight working of their middlemen. As a rule, intrigues with the

object of bringing about a petty border disturbance literally began and ended in smoke—in the harmless discharge of a few matchlocks. But in 1877, by some mischance, the matchlocks were fired in deadly earnest—a village was burnt, much property destroyed, and several innocent peasants were shot, whilst the raiders lost fifty-one in killed and wounded during their retreat. Inquiry showed that one Ajab Khan, "a powerful and intriguing chief of British territory," as Government called him in the year's Administration Report, had instigated the attack which ended so murderously. He was tried for abetting a *dakaiti*, or gang-robbery, in which murder was committed, found guilty, and, to the consternation of all his fraternity, hung. In the Peshawar valley itself difficulties were not reduced by the presence of a large and biennially relieved garrison of regular troops, British and Native, both ignorant of the language and ways of the wily Afghans, in whose midst they dwelt. Elsewhere along the frontier the garrison was composed of a local and specially raised force of irregulars, under the orders of the Government of the Panjab; hence these troops understood their surroundings thoroughly, and neither conflict of authority nor circumlocutory delays were possible.

Different system in the Deráját division.

In the Deráját division, which was less accessible than that of Peshawar, our local officers had a freer hand. There the *Jirgas* or Councils of the tribes were from the first encouraged to deal directly with the District Officers; a border militia, or frontier

police system, was early introduced, and men of influence everywhere attached to the cause of order by the attraction of service near their homes in the newly raised Frontier Police. The light duties of outpost life, singly as scouts or in bodies as garrisons, were specially suited to the temperament of the wild hillmen. Their pay was good, their homes were near, discipline was easy, and uniform there was none. The mounted branch were provided with carbines, belts, and long boots; the footmen, as a rule, were armed with their national weapons only, the matchlock and sword, to which was added, for all Baluches, the distinctive shield, as characteristic of the Baluch warrior as the dagger is of an Afghan brave. Such men were ideal Cossacks, good over rough ground, quick in intelligence, and acquainted with every pass and pathway in the country.

The coercion of want.

Just as in the interior of the province to this day the number of offences against property, notably burglaries, robberies, and thefts, including cattle-lifting—a speciality in pastoral tracts—fluctuates with the price of food staples, increasing when grain is dear and decreasing after a plentiful harvest, so it was with the trans-border tribes. The coercion of want rather than innate devilry impelled them to prey on the lowlands. As soon as their leaders were subsidised, or, euphemistically speaking, given service under Government, and their neediest ruffians employed in the Border Militia, the tribe collectively began to

prefer a civilised life, including well-paid honest labour, to the more precarious but now dangerous profession of brigandage, in which its young bloods had formerly delighted. Of course now and again a malcontent few proved irreconcilable, and by degrees so committed their better-inclined clansmen as to drive a whole section or tribe even into a *badi* or open feud with our Government. In the interior of the province, and throughout India generally, individual offenders alone were proceeded against, but in frontier districts, in dealing with the independent tribes, joint responsibility was theoretically enforced, otherwise criminals would have easily escaped justice.

Treatment of border offences.

Thus, whenever a serious border offence occurred, the tribe or section to which the perpetrator belonged was required to produce him or pay compensation at the scale sanctioned by tribal custom, and accepted by our officers. In bad cases—such as murders for paltry gain or kidnapping for ransom—in order to bring more pressure to bear on an outlaw, his relatives were seized, when possible, and held as hostages. As a rule the tribe would, at first at least, assume an attitude of *non-possumus*. Independent territory being generally, from time immemorial, a recognised asylum for all proclaimed fugitives from justice, honour forbade the surrender of outlaws. As to the payment of compensation, the power of the *Jirga*, or Council of Elders, was invariably represented as unequal to the levy of a cess on their fellow-clansmen. The principle of

collective responsibility, though for centuries enforced when possible throughout Afghanistan by the stronger against the weaker sections or individuals of a community, was unacceptable to the hill Ishmaelites of our North-Western frontier. In theory, each man was his fellow's equal, and so long as he committed no offence against his tribe, he was unaccountable for his actions against an outsider. Practice conformed to theory, except in the face of a tribal danger. In such case necessity created unity, and the *non-possumus* of the elders had to change into *omne-possumus*.

Thus, then, until a tribe was convinced that our words would be followed by blows, its elders, when called in to account for the misdeeds of their offending brethren, would merely stroke their long beards reflectively, and regret the occurrence, but plead that they could do nothing. Their spokesman would hold up a dirty hand in the face of the District Officer, and indicating its fingers, say, "Look, all five are of different lengths, and so are we; we cannot be responsible for one another; we are hill-people." After several palavers, negotiations would be broken off, and the elders would depart in peace to their hills, with the warning that so many hundred rupees had been added to the outstanding account against the tribe, and that the *Sarkâr* (Government) would some day enforce payment with interest. After the lapse of months or years, a settlement would be insisted upon, and matters would then come to a crisis. The debt was often wiped

out by the acceptance of lean cattle at fancy prices, and the payment of the balance in cash, the sum being often advanced by some lowland surety who had his own reasons for wishing to stand well both with the offending tribe and with the Government. If no settlement was effected, sometimes a further period of grace would be allowed, but generally the *Jirga* would be dismissed and informed that British territory would be closed to their clansmen until the debt should be liquidated. Whether, after that, the tribe collectively went on the war-path—did *badi* as they called it—or endeavoured to earn a pardon by good conduct, depended more on accident than design. If the District Officer's "blockade," as the closure proceeding was officially called, was effectual, and no *contretemps* occurred which seemed hopelessly to compromise the whole tribe, then the chances were that prudence would prevail in their councils, and cause the *Jirga* to reopen negotiations. If, in addition, the District Officer had so timed his blockade as to make it synchronous with a large seizure in British territory of tribal property, whether goods or money deposited with our traders, cattle, or even men, women, and children, a peaceful issue was generally secured. A full settlement would then be made, old scores wiped out, and the debtor and creditor account between Government and tribe would begin again.

Frontier expeditions conducted on humani-

If, on the other hand, the District Officer had not timed his action wisely, but had imposed the blockade in a season of drought or murrain, when the

tarian principles ineffectual.

chronic poverty of hillmen had been intensified to starvation-point, the chances were that the mischievous element, always present, would by some desperate outrage so shut the door of reconciliation that the whole tribe would elect for war. Having at the time nothing to lose, and knowing the sentimental tenderness with which punitive expeditions were always conducted by us, they were astute enough to foresee that a *badi* would eventually bring them material advantage—money would be freely spent, whilst the troops were in their hills, and hostages, if required, would receive handsome allowances. When the *badi* was declared by the doing of some act of bloody treachery, the disturbed border would have no peace until our troops entered the enemy's country at harvest-time, and proved to them that the tribal powers of mischief were less effectual than ours. As a rule such counter-raids—officially designated expeditions—cost us tens of thousands or lakhs of rupees, whilst inflicting comparatively insignificant loss on the offending tribe, and ended in our accepting a nominal fine, declaring bygones bygones, and taking hostages for good conduct; in other words, paying a few score starving highlanders several hundred rupees a-month for idling in British territory for an indefinite time, under surveillance, in a comfortable *serai* or barrack. Thus our enemy, though officially beaten, in reality blackmailed us. We in fact bought him off for a time, by paying him so many hundreds or thousands of rupees for keeping the peace with us. Our coun-

ter-raids or expeditions were generally more economically and thoroughly carried out in the Deráját than in the Peshawar division, because in the former case local-service troops belonging to the Panjab Frontier Force were employed, and thoroughly understood their business, whilst in the latter regular troops, ill adapted for rough hill-warfare, were freely used.

Two frontier "little wars."

Up till 1860 in none of our hill fights had much loss been inflicted or incurred, but in the spring of that year a punitive expedition on a comparatively large scale was sent from Tank, in the Dera Ismail Khan district, against the numerous, exceptionally poor, and powerful Mahsud tribe. The butcher's bill on both sides was heavy, but the campaign was a complete failure, as our troops were, from motives of economy and fear of reverses, too early withdrawn. Three years later a large force, composed chiefly of British and Native troops of the regular army, was despatched from the Peshawar border against a nest of irreconcilables, known as the Hindustani fanatics, who had been more or less troublesome to us since annexation. After some disasters and the loss of about 1000 men, or one-eighth of the troops employed, the hostile coalition was dissolved, and the fanatics for a time ousted from their asylum and rendered powerless for mischief. That business is known as the "Ambela expedition," from the name of the place where our force was surrounded and besieged for weeks. In these two "little wars" we lost more men in a few

months than in the two years' war with the Afghans in 1878-80. Apart from the fact that our transport was deficient, and that in the Ambela expedition political preliminaries had been mismanaged, the two prominent reasons for our ill success were, that the firearm—often contemptuously described by our officers as "a gas-pipe"—with which our troops were armed was the two-grooved Brunswick rifle, very little, if at all, superior to the rude matchlock of the hillmen; and that, considering the equality of the firearms used on both sides, our force was always greatly outnumbered.

Gradual improvement in our firearms.

Between 1868 and 1870 the infantry of the Panjab Frontier Force received the Enfield rifle, after that weapon had been discarded by the British army in favour of the Snider breech-loader. For some years afterwards the stupid idea largely obtained that to give Jack Sepoy as good a rifle as that handled by Thomas Atkins would be to incur grave risk. However, common-sense prevailed in the end, and in 1876-77 our native army, including the Panjab Frontier Force, received the Snider breech-loader. For the purposes of hill-campaigning it was hardly, if at all, inferior to the Martini-Henry, with which the British troops were then being re-armed.

Crushing superiority of the breech-loader at once understood

The crushing superiority of the breech-loader over their own antiquated matchlock was early recognised by all hill tribes, and was afterwards proved again and again in 1878-80 both in Afghan-

istan and in all the minor operations against the tribes who attempted to annoy us on our lines of communication. Our hill neighbours are no fanatics, but shrewd men of action; hence they wisely object to face the breech-loader, no matter what the disproportion in numbers may be. Since its introduction, their appreciation of its excellence has been continually on the increase. Professional rifle-thieves from the hills now infest our cantonments and camps of exercise, hang about regiments on the march, and freely risk their lives to steal the coveted weapon. So successful are those rifle-thieves, that the troops themselves are now made responsible for the loss of their arms. The soldiers try many devices to defeat the thieves—bury their rifles in their tents, sleep with them, chain and padlock them together—but still the rifles disappear singly and in batches. When a breech-loader is successfully conveyed across the border, it can be sold for four or five times its market value in British territory.

by the tribesmen, but not by Government.

With full knowledge of the dread it creates amongst our hill neighbours, the Government might surely have shaken off the apprehensions of heavy losses and complications caused by our misfortunes at Ambela, and have confidently undertaken hill operations anywhere upon our immediate border with small bodies of picked troops. However, the lesson of the breech-loader, though already learnt by all the Afghan tribes, had still to be acquired by the Government. In 1887, and again four years

later, did Government send an army of 13,000 perfectly equipped troops against the contemptible Black Mountain tribes, none of whom ventured to show fight. A few score *Ghâzis* devoted themselves and attained the paradise of martyrs for the faith, and that was all. Fixed ideas die hard. Ridicule, and the enormous bills of costs presented after the 1887 and 1891 *fiascos*, finally killed the belief that to send a force under 12,000 strong across the border, within a hundred miles of the asylum of the Hindustani fanatics, might give rise to another Ambela. In 1892 yet a fourth Black Mountain expedition took place, the first on a gigantic scale having been in 1868, when Ambela was fresh in men's minds. This time only 4000 troops were employed. They reached Baio, their objective, to find it deserted, and returned without firing a shot, as no enemy ventured within sight of our soldiers, much less within range of their terrible breech-loaders. In the same year the Orakzais, a really powerful fighting clan, were also punished —and most effectually—by a force of about 5000 men.

Criticism on the fastidious humanity of our mode of fighting hill tribes.

If the records of the twenty odd punitive expeditions and raids undertaken since the annexation of the Panjab against trans-border tribes be examined, it will be seen that some were unnecessary, and that most were only nominally successful. We were always too humane—too anxious merely to show the enemy our strength rather than to effectually chastise him. Whether from motives of

economy, dread of complications, or in obedience to an order to conclude operations in so many days, and so enable a retiring Viceroy or Lieutenant-Governor even to announce to his world "*l'Empire c'est la paix*," our troops were almost invariably withdrawn as soon as the hostile *Jirga* came in, professed penitence and a readiness to surrender hostages—an act of submission never unpopular, because we treated hostages as honoured guests. Such a way of making war produced no finality, and entirely failed in its object. The trans-border tribes, barbarians though they are, do not fail in intelligence. They have always known our strength, but traded on our humanity. True, after each little expedition, generals and politicals, with an eye perhaps to possible honours, have been in the habit of congratulating Government on the complete success of the operations, and prophesying great results therefrom, and Government in turn has responded by eulogising its brave army, &c., &c., and bestowing rewards and decorations as if a hard-fought campaign had been carried to a triumphant conclusion. But all the time every soldier in the force has known that the expedition had not been a success, because prosecuted on lines which ensured failure.

The *delenda est Carthago* principle cheapest, least bloody, and kindest in the end.

To teach a hill tribe a lasting lesson, a lasting loss must be inflicted—a big bag must be made, as in 1891-92 on the Samâna, or a wholesale destruction of valuable property, such as towers, houses, crops, stored grain, must be relentlessly effected. Failing either of those desiderata, a slice of territory

should be annexed, or leading men, or a famous family, or section of a clan, blotted out by deportation. "*Delenda est Carthago*," the principle followed by Romans and Russians, is the cheapest and least bloody in the end, if the work is to be thorough and enduring. To march our army up a mountain, and then, after sitting on the top for days, weeks, or even months, to march it down again, as in the Black Mountain promenades, to destroy the crops and blow up the houses of offending individuals only, as has been too frequently the only result of a costly incursion into an enemy's country, rather exasperates than punishes, and can have no lasting effect. The *non-possumus* attitude so often assumed by a frontier *Jirga* when called to account for an outrage committed by a malcontent section or individual, is due more to a shrewd belief that we never involve the innocent with the guilty in one common punishment, than to real inability to coerce the rowdy element into obedience to the will of the majority. When a properly representative *Jirga* understands that we are in earnest, and that recusancy on their part will be followed by the rigorous application on ours of the principle of collective responsibility, they surrender the offenders or pay up compensation. This has happened on several occasions, notably early in the eighties, when the Mahsuds surrendered their ringleaders. As soon as the tribes realise that whenever a punitive expedition is sent against any of them, every member of the offending community will be treated as equally guilty, and the troops

will not return until exemplary punishment has been inflicted upon the whole tribe or section concerned, expeditions will be of rare occurrence. The Russians, who are troubled by no Exeter Hall apprehensions, understand the business better than we do. When punishment has to be meted out, they chastise wholesale and without mercy, as, for instance, in the case of the Yomud Turkomans in 1863, and of the Akhal Tekkes at Geok Tepe in 1881. After a holocaust no second lesson is necessary. The tribe is beaten, humbled, terrified. Of course, with us, humanity forbids the slaughter of women and children—so conspicuous in Russian expeditionary annals—and no more loss than the minimum compatible with the attainment of our object should ever be inflicted. But the bloodless marching up and down hill, and mere display of overwhelming strength, which have characterised most of our punitive expeditions, bring about no finality—as witness the Black Mountain promenadings. Wild fighting tribes only remember when they suffer.

Expeditions needlessly numerous between 1888-89 and 1892-93.

Were expeditions only resorted to when unavoidable, and then thoroughly carried through to a really bitter end for the enemy, the Indian taxpayers would be relieved of a burden which, between 1888-89 and 1892-93, was unjustifiably heavy. In these five years the total expenditure on military expeditions upon our North-Western and Eastern frontiers amounted to nearly two and a quarter millions "conventional" sterling.[1]

[1] The Financial Statements for 1892-93 and following year show that

Imperial and Panjab Governments both give more attention to frontier administration.

Hitherto the survey of frontier management has been confined, except in the matter of punitive expeditions, more to the earlier than the later period into which the subject divides itself. It has been seen that for many years after the annexation of the Panjab the Trans-border Commissioners and District Officers were almost supreme within their respective jurisdictions. But a time came when those quondam lord-wardens of the marches were reduced to mere reporting and advising officials. The transition was very general. It began when the "masterly inactivity" policy ended in 1869 with the Umballa conference between Lord Mayo and the triumphant Amir Sher Ali. One result of this change of policy initiated in 1869 was to make the Panjab Government more alive to its frontier responsibilities, and henceforward successive Lieutenant-Governors were at increasing pains to obtain some real local knowledge of their Trans-Indus districts, and to subject the doings of their frontier officers to an ever stricter control. The establishment of Russian dominion right along the undefined northern limits of Afghanistan, and the uncertain attitude of the Amir, concentrated atten-

the expenditure on military expeditions was as follows in "conventional" sterling or tens of rupees, viz. :—

1888-89	Rx. 374,000
1889-90	421,000
1890-91	352,600
1891-92	720,000
1892-93	350,000
	Rx. 2,217,600

tion, in Upper India at least, upon our North-Western frontier and regions beyond. The Government of India discovered that border management was no longer a mere provincial affair, but a subject for Imperial concern. The Panjab Government was called upon to give an account of its stewardship, to show cause why Hazara and all Trans-Indus territory should not be erected into a separate Chief Commissionership, under the direct orders of the Governor-General in Council—that is, of the Viceroy and his Foreign Secretary. It could not be denied that the local Government had hitherto somewhat neglected its western districts. After twenty years of British rule, except in the matter of frontier defence, those districts were much as they had been upon annexation—the roads were mere tracks, rivers and streams were still unbridged, education had made no progress except amongst townsfolk and Hindu traders; all beyond the actual border line was a *terra incognita*, untrodden by surveyor or political officer even, except during expeditions, and the independent tribes themselves were, as a whole, still wild and sometimes defiant.

Answer of Panjab Government to charge of inefficiency in frontier administration.

Such charges were easily met. It was for the Imperial not the Local Government to supply funds for the effectual coercion of offending tribes, and for the making and improving of strategic lines of road to and along the frontier. For one or both of those objects money had often been urgently applied for, but either refused or given too sparingly.

Our relations with the trans-frontier tribes had followed the "masterly inactivity" policy prescribed by the Government of India; the "close border" system was specially ordained by that Government; if the result of punitive expeditions had fallen short of full success, the Supreme rather than the Local Government was responsible for the failure, the latter having in each case exactly carried out the orders of its superior. As to border defence, a connected chain of strong forts and outposts, each fully provisioned and garrisoned, extended down the whole 700 miles of frontier, and effectually closed the mouths of all the important passes from the hills; in the Deráját the frontier tribesmen on both sides of our border had readily taken service in the Frontier Militia or Border Police. True, our trans-border highlanders were only magnificent raw material for soldiers, but not soldiers, as from Hazara to Sindh none would serve at a distance from their homes, with the solitary exception of the Afridis of the Khyber. The general distaste for discipline and stay-at-home habits of the tribes were due to heredity, the consequence of many generations of the free life of wild and sometimes hunted animals; each member, from the instinct of self-preservation, confined his wanderings to his own habitat; their taming and conversion to useful neighbours, and eventual subjects and disciplined soldiers, would, if ever achieved, be a work of time and money; to attempt the operation was beyond the means of a Local Government. The Panjab Frontier Force, number-

ing nearly 15,000 effectives of all arms[1] (all recruited from the best fighting races of Northern India—Sikhs, Gurkhas, Pathans, Dogras, and Panjabi Muhammadans), were immediately mobilisable, and admittedly second to no troops in the empire.

Reasons against a frontier Chief Commissionership.

As to the question whether administrative control would be more efficient if the frontier districts were placed under a separate Chief Commissioner, directly responsible to the Viceroy in Council, the proposed measure would involve large additional expenditure and be possibly only advantageous to the officers, who would personally benefit by the promotion and new appointments which would be given. As it was, the Viceroy's existing powers of control were supreme: in the Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab, his Excellency already had an experienced adviser, possessed of considerable local knowledge, whose recommendations must always be impersonal; whereas, were a Chief Commissioner substituted for the Lieutenant-Governor, that functionary's advice would necessarily be less impersonal, in which case it would be increasingly difficult for

[1] The Panjab Frontier Force consists of four regiments of cavalry, each 635 strong; one Guide Corps, of 475 cavalry and 920 infantry; four mountain-batteries, each of six guns; one garrison-battery; and eleven regiments of infantry, each nearly 1000 strong. Each arm maintains a full establishment of transport mules and camels; hence the whole of this magnificent force of nearly 15,000 men is mobilisable at any time at a few hours' notice. Up till 1886 the force was under the immediate control of the Panjab Government, but was then transferred to the Commander-in-Chief, though still continuing to serve locally along the frontier. The force is the field army of the frontier. There are also some 4000 Militia and local corps—*e.g.*, the Bolan, Kurram, and Khyber Rifles.

the Government of India to prevent the unreasonable growth of military charges upon its North-Western frontier. Let that Government take a lesson from the case of its Baluchistan Agency. The charges were increasing annually and could not well be kept down. There was no income to speak of, but the demand for money would be constant.

There could be no effectual answer to such a defence. All that the Government of India could for the time do, was to control more closely the policy of the local executive, and criticise that executive's action. The question was still undecided when the so-called "mischievous activity" policy, which had succeeded the period of "masterly inactivity," pushed India into a new war with Afghanistan.

Cost of the Afghan war, 1878-80.

That war ended in 1880. Besides the enormous expenditure incurred during hostilities, India's otherwise struggling finances—for the gold value of the rupee had already begun to shrink—were being debited with some ten or twelve lakhs of new annual charges. The admitted cost of the 1878-80 Afghan war is 25 millions sterling, of which England contributed one-fifth. To complete the account, the consequential charges for pensions, rewards, subsidies, allowances to a host of political refugees from Afghanistan, renovation of material, &c., &c., should all be also estimated, capitalised, and included. Were that done, some seven or eight millions sterling would have to be added to the accepted total.

The war and the falling rupee had so reduced resources that the question of the dismemberment of the Panjab was allowed to fall into abeyance for a time. The Government of India therefore only tightened its control over frontier politics, and transferred the direction of the Panjab Frontier Force from the Panjab Government to the Commander-in-Chief (1886), a change received with acclamations by the officers of the Force, as it opened staff appointments in the Bengal army to them, and promised a better recognition of their services than formerly, when they had been, as they called themselves, "nobody's children." One result of the action of the Viceroy was, that the Government of Panjab, aware that its Trans-Indus administration was now subjected to a continuous and jealous scrutiny, was quickened from a state of occasional attention to frontier matters to one of constant watchfulness.

Scheme for the erection of a separate frontier province left in abeyance.

Amongst other reforms was the recasting of many Trans-Indus practices. By the revision and extension of "the Frontier Regulations," criminal law and procedure were reasonably adapted to popular ideas of justice, the punishment of offenders was made fairly certain, and the incentive to crime, created by the improbability of detection and punishment, was minimised by the steady enforcement of communal responsibility upon even our own village communities, failing the discovery and surrender by them of the individual criminal. The Lahore Chief Court, it should be added, has no

Improvements in frontier administration since 1878.

jurisdiction over cases disposed of under the Frontier Regulations. This of itself tends to reduce crime, by reducing the loopholes for escape afforded to accused persons tried regularly by the criminal courts. Border management in both the Peshawar and Deráját divisions was thoroughly overhauled and systematised; the civil staff was increased, and direct dealing by our officers with tribal *Jirgas* substituted for intercourse through irresponsible middlemen — a change facilitated by the general knowledge of colloquial Pashto amongst all Englishmen serving on the frontier.[1] In addition, the Deráját militia system was largely extended; Khyber pass arrangements were improved and put on a permanent footing, satisfactory both to the pass Afridis and to Government.

Progress in border defence arrangements.

Our large frontier cantonments of Abbottabad, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu (Edwardesabad), Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan were connected —the small Kohat pass gap excepted—by a metalled and bridged road, and the communications between these cantonments and their respective outposts were also greatly improved: strategic railways were also taken in hand, and so rapidly pushed forward that it would now be easy to concentrate a large field force at any point of our North-Western frontier within two or three days of the issue of orders. In Baluchistan, directly administered through an Agent by the Government of India, the bonds

[1] All officers serving in a civil capacity on the frontier have to pass a stiff examination in colloquial Pashto or Baluchi.

attaching its fine people to the cause of good government were drawn closer by a still more liberal expenditure, considering the population of the country, than was sanctioned for the more turbulent Panjab border, and a plan of government thoroughly consonant with Baluch ideas of justice was formulated and cautiously introduced: further, Quetta, Peshin, and even distant New Chaman on the Kandahar side of the Khwaja Amran range and only sixty miles from Kandahar itself, were connected by rail with the railway system of India; an alternative route from Dera Ghazi Khan to Quetta was made practicable for vehicular traffic of every description; the Zhob country was incorporated with Baluchistan, and the lower part of the Gumal trade-route with Afghan Khorasan was opened to traffic, much on the same lines as the Khyber had been—that is, the sections concerned of the Mahsud tribe were subsidised for surrendering all claim to the exaction of tolls within their limits.

Results of our new frontier policy.

Up to date the new policy of frontier activity initiated upon the termination of the last Afghan war has conspicuously resulted in a large annual increase of expenditure, the consequent strengthening of the Trans-Indus military position, and the dawning of a conviction on the minds of the tribesmen generally, and Government beneficiaries in particular, that their interests are identical with those of India. That after forty-four years of our rule our influence over and knowledge of the tribes immediately west of our actual border is so small,

is due to the effects of the old inactive policy, which was not finally and for ever abandoned until about fifteen years ago. Our thorough awakening only dates from 1880. In the fourteen years which have since elapsed, progress has been real and continuous. Poor, treacherous, barbarous though the tribesmen are, they are all very shrewd and greedy for gain. They know now that the days of successful brigandage, formerly the most popular means of a precarious livelihood, are now over. They know that the passes are now safe for the passage of caravans, and that long accounts are no longer tolerated. They know that prompt settlement is required whenever an outrage is committed, and that evasive measures are now useless. In short, they recognise that the old order is changing and giving place to a new, that *nolens volens* they must adapt their habits to those of honest men—or starve. Being in the mass sensible fellows, their choice will be to live and work. Their poverty and individual irresponsibility—the latter now no longer a consequence of their circumstances—were the true causes of their having been little better than hungry wild beasts in the past. The recent agreement with the Amir of Afghanistan has at last definitely placed those tribes entirely within our political frontier, and they have been made to understand that in future they will receive neither countenance nor support from Kabul, should malcontents seek to embroil their clans with our Government. Thus west and east of the mountainous strip which lies between the dominions of

the Queen-Empress and the Amir of Kabul a converging pressure is now being brought to bear on the intermediate inhabitants. The extent to which that pressure will gradually tame and civilise them, depends largely on the maintenance for many years to come of a strong and friendly Amir in Afghanistan, and on the amount of money which the Government of India can afford to expend in ameliorating the miserable condition of the tribesmen—that is, in subsidising the leading men, and giving employment to the clansmen. The opening up of roads and the enlistment of their young bloods in the local militia, if enough money can be found, should give us a strong hold both upon their country and their interests.

CHAPTER X.

INDEPENDENT TRIBES WITHIN OUR POLITICAL FRONTIER.

FOUR GROUPINGS OF TRANS-BORDER TRIBES. FIRST GROUP: KOHISTANIS AND CIS-INDUS SWATIS—BLACK MOUNTAIN TRIBES—THE HINDUSTANI FANATICS — AMBELA EXPEDITION, 1863 — THE SWATIS OF SWAT—UTMANKHELS—MOHMANDS—BAJOUR. SECOND GROUP: THE AFRIDIS—KHYBER PASS ARRANGEMENTS—THE KOHAT PASS—ORAKZAIS—ZAIMUKHTS—THE KURRAM VALLEY TRIBES—THEIR ANNEXATION—USE OF THE VALLEY TO US. THIRD GROUP: TRIBES OF THE SULIMANS—THE WAZIRIS—THE MAHSUD EXPEDITION, 1860. FOURTH OR BALUCHISTAN GROUP: THE BALUCHES — THE TAMING OF THE DIVIDED TRIBES — SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION OF BALUCHISTAN A SUCCESS—ITS EXPENSIVENESS—SMALL RESULTS AFTER FORTY-FIVE YEARS' CONTACT WITH THE TRANS-BORDER TRIBES WITHIN OUR POLITICAL FRONTIER—LESSON TAUGHT.

Four groupings of trans-border tribes from north to south.

HAVING briefly considered the administration of our North-Western frontier as a whole, we may now survey in some detail, from north to south, the tribes inhabiting the mountainous belt immediately beyond our actual but inside our political border. The first grouping will be the clans between the southern limits of the Gilgit Agency and Peshawar; the next those holding the hills between the Khyber pass and our new possession the Kurram valley; then will come the Waziri and cognate tribes of the Suliman range; and lastly, those under the control of the Governor-General's Agent in Baluchistan.

General description of first group north of Peshawar and Khyber.

Enclosed between the southern limits of the Gilgit Agency on the north, Kashmir and the British district of Hazara on the east, Peshawar and the Khyber-Kabul route as far as Landi Kotal on the south, and Northern Afghanistan just west of the Kunar or Chitral river on the west, lies a square block of difficult mountains. Of these mountains and their hybrid inhabitants we have very little exact knowledge. In the last forty years a dozen punitive expeditions have penetrated for a few miles into that unknown land, with the object of chastising one or other of its numerous independent tribes; but as a rule, to avoid "complications" or expenditure, the troops have done little more than what is called "lift the *purdah*" of the offending mountaineers—that is, explore some of their hills and valleys. The whole tract measures roughly 125 miles from east to west by 50 from north to south, and encloses an area of about 6000 square miles. It is a maze of lofty and precipitous ranges, whose lowest passes are closed by snow for half the year. Thus Nature's barriers so effectually restrict intercourse between the little republics and khanates settled in the glens and valleys as to render combined and sustained action by their inhabitants very difficult. This general statement is somewhat modified by the fact that the Indus and Swat rivers traverse the region from north to south, and are, where not too rapid, to some extent highways of connection. The former rushes through a narrow deep bed, a mere cleft amongst precipitous hills; the

latter flows for many miles through a valley which is so rich and densely populated that its people form a little self-contained world of their own, fortunate in the protecting seclusion of their encircling mountains. Each community lives from generation to generation in ignorance of most occurrences beyond its own narrow snow-bound horizon. Now and again a wave of fanaticism, or the ambition of an upstart seeking to carve out for himself a kingdom, excites the young bloods of the clans to battle; but after a period of commotion, all settle down once more into their old ways, tend their flocks and herds on the higher slopes of their ancestral hills, cultivate rice in their lowlands in the summer, and shut themselves up in their permanent villages at the bottom of their glens throughout winter. They are, of course, all Muhammadans and priest-ridden. The fighting strength of all the clans of this block, counting all males over fifteen years of age as effectives, and ignoring dependants, Hindkais, and Hindus, may aggregate 80,000. As their arms are matchlocks, swords, and spears, some of the tribes unwarlike, and a general combination impracticable, the offensive power of these mountaineers is insignificant; but when on the defensive, owing to the enormous strength of their fastnesses, and their guerilla way of harassing an enemy, their subjugation would be costly and difficult.

Kohistanis and Cis-Indus Swatis.

Taking the tribes from east to west, the Kohistanis and Cis-Indus Swatis come first. The former are a brave, quiet, non-Afghan people, shepherds

and traders by occupation, with a fighting strength of under 5000 men. They have never given us trouble. Their recent attack on Chilas was a foolish but patriotic stroke for freedom. We were the aggressors, not they. Unlike the Kohistanis, the independent Cis-Indus Swatis are poor specimens of manhood. They were pushed eastwards from Swat to their present hamlets by an invasion of Yusafzai Afghans, eight or ten generations ago, and are politically of small account. Their fighting strength is about 6000 only. They have occasionally raided on their Swati brethren in British territory, and been "blockaded" and counter-raided by us by way of punishment, but can never be other than contemptible.

Black Mountain tribes.

We now come to the Isazais of Yusafzai stock, collectively known as the Black Mountain tribes, the occasional allies of the Swatis and Kohistanis. Their male adults number about 5000, and are, like most Afghan highlanders, very poor; but, unlike some branches of their tribe—the Bunerwals, for instance —their reputation for bravery is low. Inherited feuds with their connections inside our border, restrictions imposed by us on their salt-carrying trade, and the settlement in their midst or near them of a nest of *Ghâzis*, known as the Hindustani fanatics, made them after annexation even more hostile to our Government than they had been to that of our predecessors, the Sikhs. The history of our "little wars" with such miserable foes is from first to last discreditable to us. In 1852-53

we marched a mixed force of regulars and worthless levies, amounting to almost 5000 men, up the Black Mountain, encountered no opposition, and then hurried our men down again. Naturally the expedition failed as a deterrent. In 1868 we sent 15,000 men against the same people, and repeated the abortive operation of 1852-53. The same costly but unreal "chastisement" has since been three times administered—in 1887, in 1891, and again in 1892. On no occasion has there been any fighting. A few *Ghâzis* attained martyrdom, and that was all. The scattered peasantry, whom we called the enemy, with their badly-tempered swords and knives and miserable matchlocks, naturally declined on the three last occasions to face an army equipped with breech-loaders, mountain-guns, and latterly even machine-guns. In the earlier expeditions their "friendlies" reaped a rich harvest from our presence amongst them, by selling us supplies whilst the offending individuals or sections whom we sought to punish remained in hiding. The amount of damage which our troops were able to inflict, by burning the woodwork of huts or destroying the grain-stores of individual offenders, never amounted to more than a few hundred rupees, whilst the daily expenditure incurred by Government during such gigantic hill manœurves on campaigning scale was many thousands of rupees. Since the last abortive attempt in 1892 at beating up an emeny who would not show, we have adopted the less expensive system of employing the best of

those needy hillmen in the Frontier Militia, and thus making it worth their while to keep on their good behaviour. The system will probably succeed, as it has elsewhere on our Deráját border.

Bonerwals.

Now, passing westwards and crossing the Indus to the Peshawar district, we come to a manlier and more numerous branch of the great Yusafzai family of tribes, the Bonerwals of the Boner valley. They are the ideal of what Afghan highlanders should be, simple, austere, religious, and patriotic. They number some 30,000, and can turn out over 6000 fighting men. All they desire is to be left alone, and doubtless their exclusiveness would have been always respected by us but for a wave of fanaticism—induced partly by the miscalculations of our political officers—which affected them in 1863.

The colony of Hindustani fanatics in Boner.

The military colony of Hindustani fanatics alluded to in the last page had long found an asylum in, or on the confines of, Boner. They were recruited from Hindustan, and maintained by donations from bigoted Musalmans, mostly resident in India. The existence of those fanatics dates back to Sikh times. The idea of raising and equipping a corps of *Ghâzis* to carry on war to the knife against infidel Sikhs had first been successfully developed by a holy adventurer early in this century. The corps never attained more than 1000 men, and was rather tolerated by the Bonerwals and their neighbours for the prestige and material advantage its presence brought to their country —for they paid well for all supplies—than as

coming martyrs for the faith. In 1852, and again in 1857 and 1858, the leader of those fanatics had failed in his attempt to bring about a war against us.

Ambela expedition, 1863.

In 1863 he succeeded better. As soon as our troops entered the hills a *jehâd*, or holy war, was proclaimed against the infidel English. Swatis and Bonerwals gathered in thousands to oppose our advance. We were at first too few in numbers and too insufficiently provided with transport to do more than hold our own against the tribal coalition. For more than a month our force was kept in check at Ambela, a spot only a few miles beyond our border. After the expedition had dragged on for some weeks, its political control was transferred to an officer whose diplomacy roused mutual suspicion and dissension amongst the already disheartened leaders of the coalition, and soon broke up the gathering against us. His mode of procedure was simple but effective. He caused letters to be intercepted by the enemy, the contents of which made it appear that some of their chiefs were negotiating terms with him on their own account. On one occasion he declined to see the *Jirga* or representative deputation of the Bonerwals as a body, but admitted its most influential grey-beard into his tent, a man personally known to him. The old warrior, suspecting nothing, sat silent, waiting for the Sahib to address him. However, the Sahib went quietly on with his writing. At the end of half an hour or so

he looked up and said, "Well, Fateh Khan, I hope your parrot is all right?"

"Yes, Sahib, but——" said the astonished Fateh Khan.

"There, that will do; you can go," broke in the Sahib. "You can join the other members of the deputation."

Fateh Khan did so, but not one of his fellow-clansmen believed his story. The tribe was convinced that their chief had been privately bought off; for who ever heard of a palaver with a busy Sahib, lasting over half an hour, in which nothing was said but an irrelevant remark about a parrot?

So the holy war ended. In the presence of our officers the Bonerwals themselves destroyed the paltry barracks and magazine of the fanatics, and subsequently expelled them from their limits. The expedition cost us a loss in killed and wounded of nearly 1000 men, or about one-eighth of the troops engaged,—a loss roundly equal to Russia's whole butcher's bill during her thirty years' conquest of Turkestan, a country as large as France and Germany put together. The duration of the expedition, the severity of the fighting, and small results, brought about that dread of "complications" and that employment of overwhelming numbers of troops which have since marked most of our military operations beyond our North-Western frontier. In the coalition against us in what has since become known as the "Ambela expedition," from the name of the

place in which our camp was so long besieged, the Swatis, under their *Akhûnd* or Pope, brought a contingent from their own valley, as did also the men of Bajour and Kunar farther west. The united strength of those crusaders from a distance was 6000 men. Their presence swelled the whole force of our opponents to upwards of 15,000 men.

The Swatis of Swat.

Those Swatis are also Yusafzais. They occupy the long, narrow, rich valley of the Swat river, which lends itself to rice cultivation. The climate of the valley is moist and malarious, hence the inhabitants are fever-stricken and of poor physique. Their country is closely cultivated and densely populated. They number about a lakh. They are bigoted and entirely priest-ridden. In 1849 and 1852 we had occasion to chastise some of their villages nearest to our border by crop-burning raids rather than expeditions. In the Mutiny year the Swatis were so preoccupied by a civil war amongst themselves that their Pope missed his opportunity for heading a crescentade against ourselves. The part he played in the holy war of 1863 against us has just been noticed. Even then he joined the tribal coalition unwillingly, fearing that if he kept aloof the influence of his rival, the priestly leader of the Hindustani fanatics, would be increased to his own detriment. Since the Ambela war the Swatis have, on the whole, maintained friendly relations with our villages on their border, their own incessant party squabbles absorbing the energies of their young bloods. Collectively

preferring husbandry and trade to strife, having a full knowledge of the justice and comparative lenience in matters of taxation of our Government, and being naturally peaceful, they would presumably welcome our annexation of their valley, should such a costly and probably useless forward move be ever undertaken. They are in all respects very like our own Bannuchi subjects, who have been, though bigoted Musalmans, excellent *ryots* ever since their valley was peacefully annexed by us in 1848-49. Afghan communities along our North-Western frontier, so long as self-misgoverning, have always been liberal in their gifts to their spiritual guides, and those holy drones have invariably settled thickest where the soil was richest. Whenever British rule has succeeded self-misgovernment, the peasantry have rapidly achieved partial emancipation from the thraldom of their priests, and longed to recall the gifts which they had previously so freely bestowed. The reason is, that the superior sanctity of descendants of the Prophet made their location in a village during the home-rule period a source of protection, which is no longer required under a stronger foreign Power. Were Swat annexed, priestly opposition would easily be conciliated, as it was in Bannu, by the assessment of their lands at a lower rating than those of laymen, and by small revenue-free assignments to the men of most influence.

Utmankhels.

West of Swat is the country of the Utmankhels, a powerful exclusive tribe, whose fighting strength

has been variously estimated, so vague is our knowledge, at from 5000 to 10,000 men. The former figure is probably the nearer estimate. They have always been good neighbours to us except on two occasions—1852 and 1878—when outrages, committed in British territory by a few malcontents, were promptly avenged by retaliatory forays upon the offending hamlets.

Mohmands.

Continuing westwards, we next come to the great Mohmand tribe, who hold the hills north-west of Peshawar right down to the Khyber pass, and owe a loose allegiance to the Amir of Kabul, though also politically connected with us. We pay some of their sections small subsidies for keeping an alternative to the Khyber route open, that latter route being sometimes closed when the tribes safeguarding it are fighting amongst themselves. The independent Mohmands—for some sections are British subjects settled in the Peshawar district—are a strong turbulent people, with a fighting strength of about 15,000. They were until lately marauders and robbers by inclination and circumstance, and peaceful only when afraid or bought over. Their nearest sections were punished by us in 1851, in 1852, and again in 1854, but none of those forays or expeditions led to any result. They continued their raiding and kidnapping outrages as before, their object being to force us into restoring to their leaders certain *Jagirs* or revenue-free land assignments in British territory, which had been confiscated because of their misconduct. In 1857 their

tardy preparations for a holy war against us were cut short by the fall of Delhi, and the consequent certainty that the infidel English would continue to rule India. In 1863 the ferment amongst the tribes, caused by our difficulties at Ambela and the despatch of the "fiery cross" far and wide, emboldened the Mohmands to venture down into the plain nearly 6000 strong, when they were charged again and again by 450 of our native cavalry and easily scattered. In 1879-80, during our war with the Afghans, a force of 12,000 Mohmands and Bajouris attempted to close the Khyber pass against us, but were so roughly handled by the few troops available to oppose them that each gathering was dispersed with the greatest ease. The Mohmands were last year divided between the Amir and the Government of India. Those westward of the watershed between the Kunar and Panjkora rivers have been definitely recognised as inside Afghanistan, those eastwards of that as yet undemarcated line being within the political frontier of India. The delineation is geographically good but ethnically bad. If practically enforced, the Mohmands will probably resent such vivisection.

Bajour and Umar Khan.

So far our relations with the tribes whose borders march with ours in the Hazara and Peshawar districts have alone been described. In none of our counter-raids and expeditions did our troops penetrate more than a few miles beyond our actual frontier. We consequently know little accurately of the interior. The petty Khanates of Bajour, and

the mountains and valleys immediately south of the route used by us between Gilgit and Chitral, have yet to be explored and surveyed. The Bajouris may number a lakh all told. Their internal dissensions and troubles, consequent on the rise and fall of unscrupulous upstarts like Umar Khan of Dîr, will doubtless absorb all their energies for a time, should not a settled Government find it advisable to enforce peace amongst them by occupying their country or supporting a claimant for power. It is commonly believed in India that Umar Khan of Dîr, just mentioned, has received material encouragement from us, and that it is by the possession of breech-loaders, either purchased with our permission in Peshawar or presented to him by us, that he is gradually crushing his neighbours and carving out for himself a small and probably ephemeral kingdom. The wisdom of interference in the unceasing party strifes of petty independent countries, whose paltry affairs can be of small concern to us, is doubtful. It is believed that next to the direct Kunar route, which is wholly in Afghanistan, the shortest and easiest from British territory to Chitral lies through Bajour up the Panjkora river. If so, were Umar Khan to become Amir of Bajour and well disposed to us—as he would necessarily be, his power depending on our recognition and probably also material support—Chitral would be accessible all the year round, and weeks nearer to India than it at present is by the circuitous road now followed *viâ* Kashmir, Gilgit, and Mastûj. But even so, on

Umar Khan's death his mushroom kingdom would probably be resolved into its pristine components of a congeries of independent communities. Afghan tribes, like the ancient Greeks, never tolerate individual pre-eminence for long. They practise their theory that all men are equal, and sooner or later the aspirant to kingship or the successful tyrant is removed by dagger or bullet. Afghanistan itself is no exception to the general rule. The position of its Amir would be precarious, and his powers at best merely that of a *primus inter pares*, but for the recognition and material aid of the Government of India. To weld into enduring unity the inhabitants of the glens of Bajour, separated as they are from each other for six or eight months in the year by snow-closed passes, may some day be the work of a great civilised Power, but is beyond the capacity of a petty local chieftain like Umar Khan.

Second group. The Afridis.

We must now leave the Bajouris and their neighbours and hurry southwards to the country between the Khyber-Kabul route—the upper slopes of the Sufed Koh on the west—and the Kohat district, with its recent extension westwards, the Kurram valley. That block makes roughly a square 65 miles each way, and contains over 4000 square miles. Here dwell in savage independence the Afridis, six of whose eight clans are generally spoken of as the Khyber tribes. They are collectively the finest and best armed race of dare-devil Afghans on our border, and are believed to have a united fighting strength of not less than 25,000 men. Neither Moghal Em-

peror, Sikh Khâlsa, Amir of Afghanistan, or Viceroy of India has ever made any enduring impression upon them. Each clan is supreme within its own narrow limits, sometimes at peace and sometimes at war with a neighbouring clan, but all readily uniting against an external foe. Inside the clan almost every family has its inherited blood-feud. Greed and overweening pride are the strongest characteristics of the Afridis. Unlike most of the other trans-border Afghans, they readily take foreign service. "In the height of the Mutiny, for instance, one of the sections of the Afridis furnished us with 1600 picked men, whom we formed into two battalions. . . . They went down to Oude, and served for more than a year to our satisfaction."[1] Some 4000 of their young men are now soldiers in our Native army and in those of our Indian feudatories. As they hold both the Khyber route and the direct road between Peshawar and Kohat, our intercourse with them since the first Afghan war has been continuous. Although our troops have on several occasions—notably in 1855, 1877, 1878, and 1879—penetrated far into their barren hills—thoroughly "lifted their *purdah*," as the frontier phrase has it—hostilities have never been prolonged beyond a few days. The loss of pass allowances and the privations consequent on a blockade are, as a rule, sufficient to at once coerce malcontent sections into submission to the will of the tribal representatives, who col-

[1] See letter from the late Lord Lawrence to the 'Times,' dated November 19, 1878.

lectively prefer peace and payments to war and want.

For the last thirteen years the Khyber pass has been open between sunrise and sunset on two stated days in the week, each caravan being escorted through by their former plunderers, now organised into a regiment called the Khyber Rifles. Our annual toll income is something over half a lakh of rupees, and our disbursements in subsidies and pay of men about double that figure. At Jamrud and Landi Khana, the two ends of the pass within our political border, strong blockhouses exist, and the route is now as safe during the hours on which it is officially open as any highway in India. At such times the road itself is inviolate, though the peaceful trader or inquisitive globe-trotter may now and again be startled, as he passes through the grim defile, by the crack of a rifle fired in earnest or devilry not two hundred yards to right or left of him. Provided that within the safeguarded limits no violence occurs, the clans collectively, or individuals singly, may pursue their private blood-feuds at pleasure. The arrangement answers admirably, has stood the test of twelve years' experience, and on two occasions the Khyber Rifles have volunteered for active foreign service, and proved themselves thoroughly disciplined troops, and of course excellent cragsmen. Khyber pass arrangements.

The Khyber arrangements are better than those in force for keeping open the Kohat pass. These latter well illustrate the susceptibilities of our The Kohat pass.

touchy neighbours the Afridis. The only direct road from Peshawar to Kohat runs through nine miles of easy Afridi territory, a narrow tongue of mountains projecting almost to the Indus. By that road the distance between the two cantonments and civil stations is 36 miles. When the pass is closed the traveller has to go round by Rawalpindi, a *détour* by rail and road of 170 miles. The distance will shortly be reduced to 100 miles when the northern portion of the Attock-Mâri branch railway is completed. The Kohat pass allowances amount to Rs. 12,000 a-year, in return for which all that is required of the recipients is that travellers be not molested. We thus pay handsomely for a right of way through the only line of Trans-Indus communication which exists between two large cantonments; but as no road has yet been made through the pass, it is only practicable for foot and mounted men. For nearly half a century now we have, from fear of hurting the feelings of the pass villagers, refrained from insisting on their making the route practicable for wheeled traffic. The attraction of an increased subsidy and large profits from road-making contracts fails to tempt the Afridi sections concerned to permit a rough track being converted into a high-road, because such conversion would, they say, be a visible sign of their loss of independence. The Khyber pass, on the other hand, is traversed by a splendid road, made originally more than fifty years ago during the first Afghan war, up which the traveller drives as if he were on an Indian highroad.

Notwithstanding that fact, the Kohat pass is still, in 1894, in the same state of nature as it was when first forced by us forty years ago, in 1853. We have twice had opportunity for insisting on having a proper road made through it—once in 1853, when a series of raids and outrages compelled our long-suffering Government to punish the Adam Khel section of the Afridis; and once again in 1877-78, when the hills of the Jowaki section were occupied by an army for the two severest winter months, and that clan reduced from prosperity to misery. The reason why we have never made a road through the pass is, that Government in its dealings, as well with its Indian feudatories and subjects as with the most barbarous of the trans-border clans, is always scrupulously faithful to its promises and engagements, and our original agreement with those Kohat-pass clans was that they should give us a right of way only and no more. It is the knowledge of our good faith which gives England the great name she has throughout Central Asia,—a fact which will bear fruit in our favour should the Afghans ever be compelled to take sides in a war between Russia and England fought out on some line between our respective existing frontiers.

Besides the Afridis two other Afghan tribes—the Orakzais and Zaimukhts—occupy the southern end of the block of mountains with which we are now dealing. The former are a powerful collection of clans, capable of bringing over 6000 armed men into the field; the latter are a small strong tribe,

Orakzais.

whose fighting strength is about 3000 men only. Both inhabit the mountains immediately to the north-west of the Kohat district, and have, owing to the natural strength of their fastnesses, and their marauding instincts, caused our frontier villages from first to last a good deal of loss. Expeditions of the old style were launched against the Orakzais in 1855 and 1868, but it was not until 1891 that the tribe realised what punishment should mean. Our troops entered their hills in mid-winter, quartered their whole country, blew up their towers, burnt the woodwork of their villages, destroyed their grain-stores, and did not finally withdraw until dominating positions on the Samâna range had been occupied and garrisoned. A treacherous rising soon after occurred, on which the former operations were repeated, but more drastically, and resulted in exemplary punishment being inflicted on the tribe. Had the work ended with the heavy losses in life and property suffered by the Orakzais in those two expeditions, the lesson would have been an enduring one, and have left no open wound. It was, however, decided at the end of the first phase to fortify and garrison several strong commanding positions just inside the enemy's territory. By so doing we have permanently locked up in unimportant positions regular troops, who in war-time could be better employed elsewhere. In addition, a large and unnecessary charge is added to the already heavy military expenditure of the Government of India, and a perpetual grievance is

created which will embitter the Orakzais against us for all time.

Zaimukhts.

The Zaimukht tribe remains to be noticed in this division. They gave us no serious annoyance until in the Afghan war of 1878-80, when, excited by the preaching of a holy fanatic, they infested the Thal-Kurram road, and committed several murderous outrages. A small force was sent against them, their country explored and mapped, and they themselves so severely handled that they soon sued for terms, and have since given no further trouble.

Our connection with the Kurram valley.

Advancing southwards, we now come to what may be called our latest acquisition, the Kurram valley. It was by this route that General (now Lord) Roberts marched on Kabul in 1878, and again, after the massacre of the Cavagnari Mission, in the following year. The valley is occupied by the Turis, who are Shias or unorthodox Muhammadans, and therefore hostilely regarded by their neighbours of the orthodox Sunni persuasion. The Turis are able to muster 8000 fighting men. When our troops evacuated the Kurram valley after the government of Afghanistan had been bestowed by us on Abdur Rahman Khan, the present Amir, we established a protectorate over, and even guaranteed to, the Turis their independence on certain easy conditions. The gift was productive of anarchy instead of order in the valley.

Left to their own devices, and surrounded by the unruly subjects of the Amir, the Turis could neither govern themselves nor keep on terms with their

neighbours. They had, in fact, never been really independent, as the valley had been, before our last war with Afghanistan, an integral part of the kingdom of Kabul. For years they importuned us to give them peace and security by annexation. For years the Amir, irritated with the forward policy of the Government of India, whilst possibly secretly fomenting disorder in the valley, accused its inhabitants of being the disturbers of the peace on his own border.

The Amir advises us to occupy the Kurram valley.

The tension between the Amir and the Government of India was not diminished by the failure of the attempt to induce his Highness to receive the Roberts Mission. He would have none of it. To send the former conqueror of Afghanistan into the country with an escort amounting to a small army, foreshadowed dictation or war, and must in either case have lowered the Amir's prestige in the eyes of his subjects. In refusing to receive such a military mission, the Amir proved himself to be a strong and prudent ruler. In making the best of that refusal, the Government of India showed both wisdom and prudence. The situation was such that ambitious soldiers and civilians throughout India thought—the wish being father to the thought—that a new war with Afghanistan was imminent. The Amir, however, had no real wish to quarrel with his only friend. Satisfied with his diplomatic victory, he threw us a sop by suggesting that the best way to settle difficulties in the Kurram valley was for the Government of India to occupy it. This was at

once done. The immediate results of the move are the addition of 150 miles of exposed border to the long length of our troublesome North-Western frontier, the locking-up of a garrison of regular troops in Kurram at the far western end of the valley, and the throwing of the new burden of the cost of the undertaking on the struggling finances of India. As a set-off, the Turis may become useful fellow-subjects of ours, and will contribute something under a lakh of rupees of land revenue to the cost of their own protection. Their young men have readily taken service in the Frontier Militia Force, which has been organised for the purposes of watch and ward in the valley, and doubtless many will enlist in one or other of our frontier regiments.

Is the acquisition a gain or a white elephant?

Whether the possession of the Kurram valley will continue to be a tax and burden or become a source of strength to India, seems to depend on whether or not it will prove a *cul de sac* or give us a good alternative route to Kabul, and the best practicable line for a road to Ghazni, should one ever be wanted. The prospects of either eventuality are small, as the Shutar-Gardan blocks the road to Kabul for half the year, and Ghazni will probably be more accessible by the Tochi route. In any case the occupation and pacification of the Kurram valley, including the Paiwar Kotal — the scene of Lord Roberts' first victory in the 1878-80 Afghan war — gives us a strong forward position, whence both Kabul and Ghazni are to some extent dominated during nine months in the year.

Third group. Tribes of the Suliman range.

Now leaving the Kurram and resuming our hurried march down our North-Western frontier, we next come to the independent Afghan tribes occupying the Suliman range and its offshoots between the Kurram valley on the north and Baluchistan on the south—a block containing about 9000 square miles. Of those tribes the Waziris alone are of importance. The others—such as the Dawaris, Bittannis, Osteranahs, Shiranis of the Takht-i-Suliman, Kokars, and Turins—can be disregarded. Where not nomads, or already practically subjects, they are either numerically few, or powerless from position or want of cohesion. Of those minor tribes the Dawaris, a hybrid people like the Bannuchis, occupy permanent villages in the valley of the Tochi river, two short marches west of our cantonment and civil station of Bannu (Edwardesabad). As their country is accessible from British territory, on which they depend for a market, they can be easily coerced, either by a small punitive visitation, as in 1872, or by blockade. The Bittannis and Osteranahs are largely settled down as cultivators and traders in our territory; the Kokars and Turins are weak and scattered, and easily controlled by the officers of the Baluchistan Agency. The Shiranis, having fixed and open villages close to our frontier and constant intercourse with us, are readily assimilating to plainsmen. Their highest strongholds about the Takht-i-Suliman have twice been visited by our troops. The process of taming those Ishmaelitish savages is being promoted by the disciplinary

education and material benefits afforded by service in the Frontier Militia, for posts in which the keenest competition always exists.

The Waziris.

As to the Waziris, who collectively are fine wiry men and good specimens of the free, fierce, needy mountaineers of Afghanistan, their two main branches are the Darwesh and Mahsud clans, between whom a bitter feud is chronic. The former hold lands in the Bannu district, and are losing ground in their ancestral hills, in which their wilder and hungrier brethren, the Mahsuds, have within the present century seized some of their best glens and grazing-grounds. Collectively the Waziris can muster from 30,000 to 40,000 fighting men, of whom half have matchlocks. Numerically the Darwesh outnumber the Mahsuds by about three to two, though the latter, being entirely untamed, resident wholly in the mountains, and having from time immemorial been the faithless custodians of the Gumal pass, are the stronger, and politically far more troublesome. The divided interests of the independent Darwesh clans have prevented combined opposition on their part, on any of the four or five occasions on which it has been necessary to send troops into their hills. Our punitive expeditions against their sections have therefore been always of the old counter-raid type, and never really successful. When an enemy will not show front and possesses little property, it is difficult to punish him effectively.

With the Mahsuds the case has been different.

The Mahsud-Waziri expedition, 1860.

Their marauding bands harried our frontier villages almost with impunity until 1860. In that year 3000 of them attacked the frontier town of Tank, but were driven back into the hills with a loss of 300 men, by repeated charges effected by 150 sabres of one of our frontier regiments and a few mounted police and militia. Undisciplined hill Afghans, whether Afridis or Waziris, when charged home in a plain by a handful of cavalry, become panic-stricken and scatter at once as the advancing ranks of horsemen rush upon them. The daring of the attack upon Tank, abortive though it was, constrained Government to sanction the despatch of a military expedition to punish the Mahsuds in their own fastnesses. It was late in spring, the season when troops are healthiest, weather most favourable for hill operations, and the ripening crops readiest for destruction and the feeding of an invader's cattle. Within one month of the Tank outrage, a force of 5000 troops was advanced from Tank into the Mahsud hills. Half of the little army was pushed on towards Kaniguram, the Mahsud capital, whilst the other half was halted in a strong central position in fancied security. One night, however, the camp was surprised at early dawn by 3000 Waziris, of whom several hundreds of the bravest, sword in hand, rushed through the tents killing or wounding all men and animals within their reach.

In the confusion we lost 229 men and a large number of transport animals, whilst the enemy left

120 corpses in and about our camp. The whole campaign cost us nearly 400 men, and admittedly failed in its object of effecting the submission of the tribe. Our experiences in this, and, three years later, in the Ambela expedition, already noticed, determined Government to undertake no future expeditions except with an overwhelming force. As the Mahsuds would not submit, and the expense of maintaining a small army in their midst was heavy, the troops were withdrawn. The clumsy but cheap and sometimes eventually successful expedient of a blockade was now tried, and continued off and on, but in a half-hearted way, for the next twenty years. In 1881 a second expedition was launched against the Mahsuds. Although the force employed was numerically smaller than that of 1860, aggregating only 4000 regulars, its offensive strength was much greater, as the breech-loader had meanwhile superseded the muzzle-loader, whilst the Mahsuds were still armed as before with matchlocks and swords only. Our troops met with practically no opposition, penetrated without loss into every part of the Mahsud country, and caused the tribe to surrender all their ringleaders and accept our terms.

Fourth group. Tribes under the Baluchistan Agency.

Advancing south of the Gumal pass, we now come to the desert and mountainous country of Baluchistan and its connected tracts. That dreary land, which annually swallows up so many lakhs of Indian rupees, extends from north to south for about 500 miles, and broadens from 50 miles in the region of the Gumal pass to 450 on the coast of the Arabian

Sea. Its breadth between the Indian and Afghan frontiers averages 120 miles down to the parallel of Quetta, whence it abruptly extends to its extreme width. The whole area, 140,000 square miles, is considerably more than that of Great Britain and Ireland, yet the population is under three-quarters of a million.

The Baluches.

The Baluches are supposed to be of Arab stock. They became dominant throughout Baluchistan in the seventeenth century, and would presumably have gradually established themselves in Sindh and the south-west of the Panjab, had not their further extension eastwards been arrested by the victories of Meani and Hyderabad (1843), which gave us the former province, and by the annexation of the Panjab a few years later. They were at that time nomads and robbers, rich in camels and sheep, and lived very much as the Turkomans did up to their conquest by the Russians—indeed some authorities hold the Baluches to be of Turkoman extraction. During the first Afghan war their possession of the Bolan pass enabled them to make a good harvest out of us in allowances and plunder. Their subjugation began with the annexation of the Panjab ten years afterwards, and has been practically completed during the last fifteen years.

Taming the Baluch clans on our Dera-Ghazi border.

The process of taming those clans on the Dera Ghazi Khan border, who held both the strip of plain inside our territory lying between the Indus and the Suliman mountains, as well as the southern part of that range itself, was a work of no difficulty.

The Afghans are advanced democrats, to be ruled only by force or bought for a price. Baluches are feudalists and conservatives, to be governed through their chiefs. So trustful is a clan in the powers of their chief, that, although a Baluch calls himself a good Musalman, he is often ignorant of the creed, and rarely prays. "The chief prays for us" is his explanation. The divided clans—that is, those holding land inside and beyond our Dera Ghazi Khan frontier—were six in number, and able to bring together 15,000 men. The winning over of their six chieftains, necessarily men of intelligence and considerable culture, was a simple matter. Their feuds and disagreements were composed by us, their precarious incomes increased, and in part made secure, by personal allowances and service in the Border Militia. In each case the clansmen benefited materially by the aggrandisement of their chief. When, in 1875-76, Quetta was permanently occupied by us, and the rest of Baluchistan absorbed or mediatised, our experience with the divided clans of the Dera Ghazi Khan district enabled Government to adapt the administration of the new province to the pre-existing patriarchal systems of the tribes inhabiting it.

System of administration for Baluchistan a success.

The Khan of Khelat, a sort of over-lord or *primus inter pares*, whose authority over the chiefs of his clans had long been more nominal than real, was gratified by an annual subsidy of a lakh of rupees, and gladly resigned his precarious rights over the district of Quetta for a quit-rent of 25,000 rupees

a-year. He further farmed to us the right to levy toll on caravans using the Bolan pass for an annual payment of 30,000 rupees. The chiefs of the clans have since been formed into a confederacy under their titular suzerain, the Khan, local rifle corps have been raised for the protection of the Bolan and Zhob routes, and the whole province has been reduced from anarchy to order. On the conclusion of the last Afghan war (1878-80) certain tracts of small value formerly recognised as belonging to Afghanistan, though geographically in Baluchistan, were surrendered to us by treaty. These have since been administered by us directly under the orders of the agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan.

Only criticism to which Baluchistan administration is open, its expensiveness.

The chief criticism to which the civil administration of that Agency is open is its enormous expensiveness. In size Baluchistan is a province, but in population and revenues a mere district.

Judged by the criterion of revenue, population, and case work—in none of which respects Baluchistan attains the position of an average Panjab district—three or four Sahibs and a small subordinate native staff should suffice for the Civil government of the Agency. As a fact, the Civil staff equals in numbers and emoluments the requirements of a rich and populous province. Since the Agency was first constituted, the aim of the Agent has naturally been to raise his position to that of a Lieutenant-Governor; hence new reasons for new appointments have been ever forthcoming,

and the cost of the administration has been until two years ago annually increasing. On the other hand, the revenues, from the arid character of the country, the want of population, and the absence of capital, do not aggregate ten lakhs. Apart from the profusion of expenditure lavished on Baluchistan, its administration, judged by the contentment and progressing worldly intelligence of its inhabitants, has been eminently successful. Service in Baluchistan is popular with the Civil officers of the Agency, as work is light, pay generous, rewards in the shape of decorations and titles liberal, and climate healthy. The same cannot be said of the military garrison, whether British or Native, because living is expensive, duties irksome, and, except at Quetta itself, the isolation is wearisome.

Lesson taught by the small impression made by us on trans-border tribes.

In looking back on the history of our connection with the trans-border tribes, we should not forget that their fighting manhood aggregates about 200,000 men, with swords and matchlocks; that no Government has ever yet brought them to obedience; and that after forty-five years of contact with them, during the last fifteen of which we have spared no reasonable expense in our efforts to tame and conciliate them, they are as a whole to-day, with the exception of the feudal Baluches, some of the Khyber Afridis, and a small percentage of benefited tribesmen elsewhere, as wild, independent, and hostile to intruders as they were soon after our annexation of the Panjab. If these re-

sults are so insignificant as regards the inhabitants of the mountainous fringe beyond our actual but inside our political border, we can estimate the magnitude of the task were Russia or England to attempt the far more serious undertaking of reducing the tribes of Afghanistan to subjection.

CHAPTER XI.

ATTACK AND DEFENCE.

THE INDO-RUSSIAN QUESTION—OUR COSTLY POLICY A FAILURE HITHERTO —OUR TWO AFGHAN WARS—RUSSIA HAS A FREE HAND IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1860-68—"MASTERLY INACTIVITY" *VERSUS* "MISCHIEVOUS ACTIVITY"—VIEWS OF THE JINGO SCHOOL ON INVASION—VIEWS OF THE RAWLINSON OR ADVANCE-TO-HERAT SCHOOL—THE QUIETISTS OR OPTIMISTIC SCHOOL—MR WYLLIE'S NO-ADVANCE VIEWS—REASONS FOR NON-INTERFERENCE—SIR HENRY DURAND'S OPINION—FIRM BUT SYMPATHETIC RULE IN INDIA NECESSARY—MR WYLLIE'S VIEW OF THE HUMANITARIAN MISSION OF RUSSIA—HER ADVANCE TO THE HINDU KUSH INEVITABLE—A "STRONG, FRIENDLY, AND UNITED" AFGHANISTAN—WHAT AFGHANISTAN IS—SIR HENRY RAWLINSON'S OPINION—RUSSIA'S PROXIMITY WOULD DISTURB INDIA—SIR RICHARD TEMPLE'S ALARMISM—HERAT—SHER ALI FORCED OVER TO RUSSIA —THE "PANJDEH INCIDENT"—CONSERVATIVE ACTION, 1886-92—POPULARITY OF OUR ACTIVE POLICY WITH OFFICIALS IN INDIA.

The Indo-Russian question since 1800.

As it is important to have clear ideas on the Indo-Russian question, some facts and opinions on the subject will be here brought together. In so doing, a little recapitulation will be unavoidable.

The question dates back from 1800, in which year, as already stated, Paul, Emperor of Russia, and Napoleon, First Consul of France, elaborated a scheme for a joint expedition against India, by the route followed by every invader from Alexander to Nadir Shah.

Our costly policy a failure hitherto.

Since that year Russian diplomacy and action in Central Asia, and English counter-movements in Persia and Afghanistan, have cost India upwards of seventy millions sterling. Most of that expenditure has been useless. Its objects were to retard the advance of Russia towards Afghanistan, to make that country "strong, friendly, and united," and latterly to give us a defensible North-Western frontier. Not one of these objects has yet been attained. Our wars with Persia and Afghanistan, our missions and diplomatic manœuvring in Central Asia, have failed to retard the approach of Russia by a single year. The Amir is to-day our good friend and handsomely subsidised ally, and long may he remain so; but his unruly subjects are probably still as distrustful of our intentions, as uncertain in their attitude, as unreliable, and as anxious for independence from all external interference, as they have been at any time since we first invaded their country. The best line for a "scientific" frontier — that indeterminate ideal of Lord Lytton — is as undecided to-day as it was fifteen years ago.

Our two Afghan wars.

Of the seventy millions sterling poured out amongst the rocks and deserts of the regions beyond the Indus, the two Afghan wars of 1838-42 and 1878-80 swallowed up two-thirds. The former war has been always condemned by Englishmen of every shade of political opinion as a foolish and wicked aggression; the latter has still some apologists. The disasters of the first invasion, the Sikh

and Crimean wars, the annexations of Sindh and the Panjab, and the suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny, secured for the Indian exchequer a long immunity from further costly adventures in Afghanistan.

Russia given a free hand in Central Asia, 1860-68.

By 1860 both Russia and England in India had politically recovered from the disorganisation and exhaustion which their respective calamities of 1854-56 and 1857-58 had brought upon them. Each employed her renewed vigour in action characteristic of her ruling principles,—Russia by energetically resuming her suspended advance towards the Oxus, England by labouring to give the peoples and chiefs of her Indian dependency good government. For eight years (1860 to 1868) Russia had a free hand in Central Asia. In that period she conquered, with insignificant loss to herself, the vast territory now known as Russian Turkestan, and thus pushed her frontier southward to the Oxus, immediately beyond which lay Afghanistan. As that distracted country had been for the preceding five years without a government, owing to a war of succession amongst the sons of the late Amir, Afghan Turkestan was consequently now open to easy occupation by Russia.

Non-interference policy.

Thus, then, in 1868 the Indo-Russian position was continued abstention from interference beyond her borders on the part of India, and successful advance on that of Russia to the very frontiers of Afghanistan, which now alone intervened between the Asiatic dominions of Queen and Tzar. Instead

of being "strong, friendly, and united," which had long been the declared object of all our interference in her affairs, that land of perpetual strife was weak, hostile, and divided. The policy which had reduced Afghanistan to impotence from the position of a powerful and independent buffer-State—such as she had been for some years previous to the death of her great Amir, Dost Muhammad, in 1863—had at the time warm defenders and able opponents. The controversy between the advocates of "masterly inactivity" and "mischievous activity," as each side derisively dubbed the other's policy, was hottest and most voluminous during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lawrence (1864-68), the determined upholder of non-intervention.

"Masterly inactivity" *versus* "mischievous activity."

Amongst the champions of the two schools who published their views in the leading Reviews of the day, were Sir Henry Rawlinson, the greatest authority in Central Asian matters, and the late Mr J. Wyllie of the Indian Foreign Office. In forecasting the future, the former wrote with the experience of the old man of action, the latter with the ignorant self-confidence of the young secretariat lion. Had Mr Wyllie lived he would presumably have retracted many of his prognostications. In a series of exhaustive essays written between 1867 and 1870 he examined, with strict impartiality, the arguments advanced by both quietists and alarmists, and gave his own reasons for preferring the policy advocated by the former. These arguments, though mostly written twenty-five years ago, before the

possibility of a direct Trans-Caspian advance by Russia had fluttered our politicians, and whilst aggression was only apprehended from the side of Russian Turkestan, are still so admirably pertinent that some are reproduced here. After referring to "this phantom of a Russian invasion," Mr Wyllie asked—

The Jingo school on the possibility of the invasion of India.

Are Englishmen still haunted by the vague alarm which a quarter of a century ago hurried us into the blunder, guilt, and miserable discomfiture of the Afghan war? We answer that the old feeling still undoubtedly survives in the minds of many of our countrymen. The class, fortunately, is more numerous in India than in England. It includes, besides "the panic-mongers of the press," military men, whose professional instincts lead them to sniff the battle afar off, and to mistrust our existing frontier line, whether along the Indus or at the foot of the Khaibar and Bolan passes beyond that river, as false to the principles of the art of war. These are they who, to prove the possibility of invasion, cite the conquests of the Macedonian Alexander, of Timur, and of Nadir Shah, and who, in the so-called will of Peter the Great, the traditional policy of his successors, the treaty with Napoleon at Tilsit, and the immense development southward which the Siberian boundary has undoubtedly received, find cumulative evidence of Russia's determination to make the possibility an accomplished fact. According to these alarmists, what we have to expect is as follows: In a very short time the Russians will have military colonies on the Oxus at Charjui and Takhtapul. From Charjui troops will be thrown across the desert to Merv, and from Merv the fertile banks of the Murgab offer easy access to Herat. Simultaneously, a smaller column will proceed through Takhtapul and the defiles of the Hindu Kush to occupy Kabul. Persia, of course, will act in alliance with the invaders, and at Herat the force from Charjui will be joined by large

Russo-Persian reinforcements marching in from the shores of the Caspian Sea and the districts of Khorasan. Some delay must occur at Herat, for that city, the key of the position, will have to be fortified and provisioned, and a chain of smaller forts on either side will have to be established, stretching as far as Takhtapul in the north and Lake Seistan in the south. But the interval will be well redeemed by disarming the hostility and securing the co-operation of the Afghans. The darling dream of the whole nation is to plunder India, and Russia will offer them that guerdon, and the restoration of their old provinces of Peshawar and Kashmir to boot. Then some fine morning early in spring . . . forty thousand disciplined troops of Russia and Persia, in conjunction with a countless horde of wild Afghan auxiliaries, will be launched, resistless as an avalanche, upon the doomed plains of the southern El Dorado, and there at once is the end of our Eastern empire. Language like this is, we can assure our readers, by no means uncommon in India; and the practical remedies recommended by such speakers extend to an immediate reoccupation of all Afghanistan.

Views of the Rawlinson or advance-to-Herat school.

Politicians of another and far higher stamp, while they see clearly that any immediate or proximate danger of a Russian invasion is chimerical, nevertheless look forward with uneasiness to the inevitable day when the Russian and English empires shall be conterminous, and the presence of a first class European State on our border shall have the power at any time to fan into a flame those elements of sporadic disaffection which, of necessity, are ever smouldering in any country won and held, as India was and is, by an alien sword. For political reasons of obvious weight, they believe that it would be in the last degree dangerous, should war arise, to have India as a battle-field; and on grounds of military strategy, they are convinced that, sooner or later, we ought to occupy certain positions beyond our present frontier as outworks of the empire. Therefore, advancing from Jacobabad, which is now our uttermost station on the

Scinde border, they would proceed up the Bolan pass, through Shawl, into Afghanistan, and, leaving Kabul and Ghazni untouched, they would take possession of Kandahar and eventually also of Herat, and establish at these two points fortresses of exceeding strength, to be to India what the Quadrilateral had been to Venetia, strongholds such as no invader would dream of trying to mask. And the long process of a regular siege would, it is argued, be an almost hopeless undertaking in consequence of the natural poverty of the country, the distance of the enemy from their base, and the previous destruction of the crops of the besieged. These opinions deserve to be received with the greatest respect, for they have been advocated not only by high authorities like Sir Justin Sheil and the late General John Jacob, but also, we believe, by Sir Henry Rawlinson, who, besides his large general experience of war and policy in the East, stands *facile princeps*, as Dr Vámbéry has justly testified, among all who profess a special knowledge of the present condition of Central Asia.

Views of the quietists or optimistic school.

The majority of the British public appear to favour a third view of the question. Under the inspiration of a general optimism, rather than from any discriminate appreciation of the dangers to which the Indian empire is exposed, they scout Russophobia as an exploded fallacy. In the interests of humanity they rejoice that a dayspring of Christian civilisation is spreading through the horrible blackness of barbarism in which Central Asia has hitherto been wrapped; and they positively grudge the interval that must yet elapse before India can have a neighbour whose dealings with her will be conducted on the clear principles of European good faith, and whose settled government will offer new openings for trade. Their vision of the future is the Cossack and the Sepoy lying down like lambs together on the banks of the Indus. . . .[1]

[1] 'External Policy of India,' Wyllie, 1875, pp. 60-64. The other quotations from Mr Wyllie are from different essays in the same book.

Mr Wyllie's no-advance views.

Mr Wyllie then gives his own opinion as follows:—

Were the Russian frontier pushed forward from the line of Jaxartes to the foot of the Hindu Kush, were there war in Europe between England and Russia, or even if both those contingencies came upon us at the same time, there would still be many grave reasons for pausing before we fairly committed ourselves to the project of defending the British boundary by means of an advance into Afghanistan. In the first place, there is the nature of the country and its inhabitants, both so untractable that, except in the last resort, the task of dealing with them had far better be left to a rival or an enemy than undertaken by ourselves. It is a land, in Lord Wellesley's contemptuous phrase, of "rocks, sand, deserts, ice, and snow," and the men it breeds are warlike, turbulent, fanatical, and perfidious. Take a small force into the country, and you are beaten; take a large one, and you are starved. Then there is the financial argument to be considered. The army that made its way up the Bolan pass in 1839, all counted, was only 19,000 strong, yet the Afghan war cost us from first to last fifteen millions sterling. Whence is to come the money for a repetition of the experiment? As it is, the finances of India are with difficulty kept at a bare equilibrium, and the ways and means for any extraordinary expenditure could only be provided either by an increase of taxation or an addition to the public debt. The latter alternative manifestly hampers the resources of the empire for a future time of, perhaps, sorer need; and the dangers of popular discontent arising from the former are so great that, sooner than incur them, Lord Canning declared his readiness to dispense with the services of 10,000 English soldiers. Lastly, there can be no question that, however desirable from a strategic point of view the establishment of outworks at Kandahar and Herat might be, there are, *per contra*, certain solid advantages in the present concentration of our strength on the Indian side of the passes which would be forfeited, and some perilous responsibilities would have to be incurred, in connection with the proposed advance. For

instance, the troops now quartered on our frontier are available equally for the repulse of foes from without and for the suppression of insurrection from within; whereas every redcoat despatched beyond Jacobabad, and committed a hostage to fortune among an unfriendly race, would be so much strength taken from, so much anxiety added to, the internal garrison of India. That garrison would have to be largely increased. And whence are the men to be obtained?

Mr Wyllie then indulges in sentimental writing about Alma and Inkerman, prophesies that Russia will prefer expansion by advancing on China rather than on India, and goes on to say :—

> We believe that, with respect to Central Asia, the Indian Government can do no wiser thing than fold its hands and sit still. . . . We would be quiet now, in order that we may act with the greater vigour when the time for action comes. Every day of peace and economy that India enjoys strengthens our moral and material hold on the country.

Reasons for non-interference as long as possible.

In his three later essays, written in 1869 and 1870, one headed "Masterly Inactivity" and the two others "Mischievous Activity," he further deployed the arguments in favour of "non-interference, pure and simple, in the countries lying between the Indian frontier and the Asiatic possessions of Russia." He quoted the late Sir Henry Durand's opinion, recorded in 1866-67, when the alarmist or forward school, prompted by the late General John Jacob, were urging the Government of India to occupy the Bolan and Quetta. Sir Henry Durand wrote cautiously with regard to the then situation only :—

> I know that we could again seize Afghanistan, if it were

Sir Henry Durand's opinion.

advisable or necessary, and that, with our Indus frontier complete in its communications, parallel and perpendicular, no Power on earth could shake us out of that country. I know, too, that, with the Afghans friendly and cordial, we could, without the actual seizure of the country for ourselves, organise its defence in a most destructive manner against hostile invasions. . . . Any intervention would now be ill-timed, and is wholly uncalled for. It will be all that political and military considerations demand, if our lines of rail and river communication on the Indus frontier are rendered as perfect as it is easily in our power to make them; so that, without our at present incurring the risk of complications with Afghan and Beluch tribes and politics, it may yet be in our power rapidly to mass and securely to feed and support our forces, whether intended for operations above or below the passes. . . . If our position on the Indus frontier be one of unmistakable strength, it will long paralyse aggressive presumption.

Firm but sympathetic rule in India necessary.

Mr Wyllie more than once indorsed that opinion. He held strongly, to quote his own words, that "the true bulwarks of India are to be found within her own borders," and that the safety of British dominion in India lies in our reconciling "the natives, as far as possible, to our alien yoke by mild, firm, and sympathetic administration"—both truisms as far as they go, but evasive of the real question: he prophesied evil of the beginnings of the Afghan protectorate initiated by Lord Mayo at the Umballa conference in March 1869; and went so far as to say, "I pray England may yet withdraw her hand from Central Asia." He asked, with a child-like faith in Russian philanthropy—

Is the contact of Russia with the North-West frontier of

India a thing to be desired or deprecated? If the welfare of Central Asia is to be considered, we cannot deny that Russian order in place of Usbeg or Afghan anarchy, and that Christian tolerance in place of Moslim bigotry, would be supreme benefits to that unhappy region. But what is Central Asia to us, what are we to Central Asia? The general cause of humanity, if I may hazard a guess at "the painful riddle of this world," seems to be best served by each nation minding its own business. It is the business of England to civilise India up to a point when the natives can be left to govern themselves. Were we to be interrupted in this mission, and forced to quit the country before our time, the result in India—to say nothing of the shock to England, and, through England, to the inhabited world—would be, under any circumstances, long years of war, confusion, and misery, such as befell the denizens of our own island on the departure of the Romans. We, in our turn, might become recipients of the pathetic appeal, "The barbarians drive us into the sea, and the sea drives us back on the barbarians." I believe that we shall be traitors both to ourselves and to the peoples committed to our charge if we regard the progress of Asiatic Russia from any other point of view than the security and benefit of our own empire.

Mr Wylie's view of the humanitarian mission of Russia in Central Asia.

He assumed that the boundary of Russia would inevitably be pushed on to "the northern foot of the Hindu Kush mountains," but, against countering that move by an advance on our side into Afghanistan as allies or otherwise of the Afghans, urged the prohibitive cost of such an occupation. He had no faith in the establishment by our aid of a "strong, friendly, and united" Afghanistan. He held—

Russia will inevitably advance to the Hindu Kush.

That the artificial erection of a "strong government" on a foreign soil must, under the most favourable circumstances,

A "strong, friendly, and unit-

ed" Afghanistan cannot be artificially erected.

be about as arduous a task as it is possible to conceive any nation undertaking; and secondly, that in the national character of the Afghans there are inherent defects which reduce our attempt to a complete impossibility. The Afghan nation is an aggregate of separate clans, republican in their internal organisation. Their common saying is that "all Afghans are equal." The authority which the Amir, the head of the principal clan, nominally exercises over them all, comprises, at best, little more than a right to levy a fixed proportion of troops and money from each, for the common defence. Governments and sovereigns are changed with inconceivable rapidity. . . .

The Sardars, or chiefs of clans, are all sovereigns within their respective domains. Jealous, turbulent, and ambitious, they are always impatient to see their prince replaced by another, from whom they expect greater advantages. They will sell their services to the highest bidder; it is indifferent to them whether their friend of to-day is their enemy to-morrow, or whether they have to take arms against their relations or not. "Anything for money" is their maxim. The common people follow the example of their chiefs.

. . . . . .

What Afghanistan is.

What is to be done with a nation of this sort? We cannot make the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots. A war of succession, such as Sher Ali has just gone through, is not the exception but the rule in Afghanistan. His four predecessors spent their lives in making or meeting insurrections. The normal constitution of the country, since it ceased to be a football between the Shah of Persia and the Great Mogul of Dehli, is not one strong monarchy, but several weak and antagonistic principalities. Twice only in Afghan history have the discordant tribes been united under a native king of substantial power. And the two soldiers of fortune who achieved this feat were in their way Napoleons, born rulers of mankind, such as are not found in every generation. If out of the present turmoil a second Ahmad Shah or a new Dost Muhammad were to come

to the surface, and by establishing his own supremacy restore comparative order to the land, such a Government, born of indigenous materials and possessing a vital principle of its own, might perhaps be susceptible of some confirmation at our hands. But even then the hold which an outlay of arms and money might procure for us on Afghanistan would only be coextensive with the life of the individual monarch: when he died we should again be adrift in the periodically recurring deluge. I will not dwell on the moral aspect of the subsidy system, though whether we are justified in giving any Government the means to coerce its subjects without taking some security that our gifts shall not be abused to purposes of oppression and cruelty, is a question well meriting attention. On strictly political grounds it seems to me that we may, at any rate, wait for the avatar in Afghanistan of a hero equal to the occasion. Until he appears, our most elaborate efforts to keep any ruler going who has not strength within himself to keep his legs must be, to use Mr Bright's phrase, "sheer tinkering."

Had Mr Wyllie lived until now, he would have admitted that the avatar had appeared in the person of the present Amir Abdur Rahman.

Sir Henry Rawlinson's opinion.

On the other hand, Sir Henry Rawlinson voiced the opinions of the forward school with a persistence and ability which, coupled with the establishment of Russian outposts on the Oxus, brought about, in 1868, the cautious abandonment of the non-interference policy.

In his writings Sir Henry traced the whole history of the English and Russian policy in Central Asia, forecasted with correctness the probable position of the latter Power in 1878 should her continued advance remain unchecked by England, and

then discussed what the effect of that position would be upon India. He scouted the idea of invasion from the side of Russian Turkestan, and held that should the attempt ever be made, "it will be by way of Herat and Kandahar, where the roads are open and traverse districts that have been called the 'granary of Asia,' and not through the sterile and difficult passes between Kabul and Peshawar."

Disturbing effect in India of Russia's proximity to the Indus.

He pointed out that the propinquity of Russia to our Indus frontier would "exert a disturbing influence through the country of a most mischievous and even dangerous tendency."

It is not, he said, that the natives of India, whether Mohamedans or Hindoos, have any particular affection for the Russians, or believe that their rule will be more kindly and beneficial than our own. On the contrary, the followers of the Prophet everywhere regard the Russians as more incorrigible infidels than the English, from their uncleanly habits and their supposed worship of pictures; but, on the other hand, the approach of a rival European Power betokens change, and to the active, gambling, reckless spirit of the Asiatics, change is always exciting and agreeable.[1]

Sir Richard Temple's alarmism.

In support of that view he quoted from a report by Sir Richard Temple, and, accepting that distinguished officer's conclusions, declared that "we are living upon a volcano in India, which at any moment may explode and overwhelm us." That alarmist statement was largely based on one still more alarmist and even extravagant, in which Sir Richard Temple wildly asserted that the hostility

[1] 'India and Russia in the East,' Rawlinson, 1875, pp. 287, 288.

of the Muhammadan military and priestly classes against us "literally burns with an undying flame"; and went on to say, in the excitement of a fine frenzy, that he believed "that not more fiercely does the tiger hunger for his prey than does the Muhammadan fanatic throughout India thirst for the blood of the white infidel."

Herat, "the key of India," must be held by us.

Having demonstrated the dangers to the *pax Britannica* of India should Russia be allowed to establish herself sufficiently near our North-Western frontier to initiate intrigues with disappointed chiefs and classes against our rule, Sir Henry insisted that "the pivot of the whole Eastern Question" lay in the fact, which he emphasised by italics, "that *we cannot afford to expose Herat to the risk of being taken by a Russian coup de main.* If a Russian force is sufficiently near to threaten the safety of the key of India, we must also have a British force sufficiently near to protect it." He urged again and again that "Russia in possession of Herat would have a grip on the throat of India," hence he advised his fellow-countrymen to occupy and defend it; and, as an experienced military man familiar with the whole country between Jacobabad and Herat, gave his opinion that the force required "need not exceed a strength of 10,000 men (the greater part being, of course, Europeans), 5000 being allotted to the garrison of Herat and 3000 to Kandahar, while 1000 men might occupy Quetta and Pishin, keeping up the communications in the lower section of the line, and the remaining 1000 would

be distributed between Girishk and Farrah, so as to connect Kandahar with Herat."

Sher Ali driven into the arms of Russia through England's vacillating policy.

That advice was given in 1874, at a time when the return of the Conservatives to power made it probable that in the conduct of our foreign affairs firmness would replace weakness and indecision. During the five preceding years of Gladstonian rule Russia had played with us diplomatically whilst pushing on her preparations for the conquest of Khiva and Turkomania. The former event occurred in May 1873. It impressed the Amir of Afghanistan with a sense of his own helplessness and Russia's omnipotence — an impression deepened by the recollection that, since the Umballa conference of 1869, his solicitations for a specific guarantee from England against Russian aggression had been invariably met by empty assurances of our goodwill towards him so long as he should conduct himself like a friendly neighbour. In his trouble he now naturally turned to the apparently stronger Power. Prince Gortschakoff's declaration of 1872, accepted by quietists as "tidings of great joy," that "the Emperor looked upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere within which she might be called upon to exercise her influence," afforded no consolation to Sher Ali. He knew that Mr Gladstone relied on the good faith of Russia, and anticipated his declaration made on November 27, 1878—"I have no fear myself of the territorial extensions of Russia —no fear of them whatever; I think such fears are only old women's fears." Nevertheless he did fear,

and knowing that words are meant to conceal intentions, and that mankind is governed by force alone, he believed neither Gortschakoff nor Gladstone. In despair and self-interest he had already, before the Gladstonian confession of faith, begun negotiations with Russia. In June 1878 he received a Russian mission at Kabul and broke entirely with us. The second Afghan war followed, the only immediate and temporary result of which was the attainment, at a cost of twenty-five millions sterling, of a so-called "scientific frontier." Meanwhile the Conservatives were turned out of office by the Gladstonians, who now received a new lease of power and exercised it for five years. They abhorred the "scientific frontier," seeing in it only a forward base for a further advance into Afghanistan: we retreated within our former borders, Mr Wyllie's views being now again in the ascendant. Russia had thus once more a free hand. She again played the diplomatic game successfully, whilst really making her plans for the subjugation of the Turkomans and the annexation of Merv, "the key of Herat." She crushed the Turkomans at Geok Tepe in 1881, annexed Merv and Sarakhs in 1884, and drove the Afghans out of Panjdeh with great slaughter, before the very eyes of our mission, in March 1885.

The "Panjdeh affair" amazes the Radicals, and helps to give the Conservatives a six

That insult was received by all good Gladstonians with holy horror, brought England and Russia to the brink of war, and created a revulsion of popular feeling against the Ministry which told in the next elections. After two short intervals of change the

years' lease of power.

Conservatives, in August 1886, regained power and held it for six years. During those years facilities for the meeting of the two rival empires at some point in Afghanistan yet to be determined were rapidly advanced by both. Whilst India completed her "Kandahar railway" to New Chaman on the western side of the Khwaja Amran range, and accumulated material at Quetta for continuing the line in a few weeks over the sixty miles of intervening plain into Kandahar itself, Russia finished her Trans-Caspian line to Samarkand, *vid* Merv, "the key of Herat," and thus brought that fortified town within easy striking distance of her troops. By that grand achievement she proved that circumstances had arisen which debarred even a strong Conservative majority from giving effect to Rawlinson's dictum that "*we cannot afford to expose Herat to the risk of being taken by a coup de main.*" These circumstances were, that a year before the decisive victory of the Conservatives at the polls in July 1886, the annexation of Merv by Russia, and the completion of her Trans-Caspian railway so far, were *faits accomplis*. Moreover, the preliminaries for the demarcation of the Russo-Afghan boundary between Sarakhs and the Oxus had been agreed upon between England and Russia, and could not be reconsidered. In other respects the forward policy, hitherto the speciality of the Conservatives, as no advance was that of the Radicals, was persistently pushed for six years all along the one thousand miles of our North-Western frontier, from Gilgit to

Karachi, until the fall of the Salisbury Ministry in 1892.

Résumé of Conservative action in the Indo-Russian question, 1886-92.

That event enforced an immediate pause in the course of action, which, whatever its political worth, has, from its costliness, checked the material progress of India, and, coupled with the depreciation of the rupee and the abolition, in 1883, of the cotton duties, created serious financial embarrassment. The forward policy has had of late years powerful promoters in Lord Lansdowne as Viceroy (1889-94), and Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief (1886-93). The army in India has been increased by 10,000 British and 20,000 native troops; its efficiency and mobility have been raised to a point approaching human perfection; the cantonments at Quetta, Attock, and Rawalpindi are being slowly converted into fortified positions of great strength; and in addition to the "Kandahar railway" already mentioned, lateral lines connecting our different frontier cantonments have either been made or will be completed in a few years. All such are measures of internal preparation accepted as necessary by politicians of all shades of opinion. Those carried out, or in progress of a forward and consequently controversial class, are the military occupation of Baluchistan, and the desolate hinterland between it and the Gumal pass, of the difficult country immediately south-east of the debatable Pamir region included in the new Gilgit Agency, of the Kurram valley west of Kohat, of the last thirty miles of the Gumal route, and of the Khyber up to Landi Kotal. In

addition may be mentioned the costly worrying of refractory trans-frontier tribes, which was continually pursued from 1887-88 to 1892-93, notably, so far as our North-Western frontier is concerned, the three Black Mountain promenades of 1887, 1891, 1892, the two Samâna expeditions of 1891-92, and the affairs of Nilt, Mayan, and Chilas in 1892 and 1893, all three within the elastic sphere of influence of the Gilgit Agency.

Why an active frontier is popular with official classes in India.

An active frontier policy such as that pursued from 1888 to 1893 is of course popular with Anglo-Indians, civilians as well as soldiers, and with the English press of India, the large majority of whose readers are English officials. As Sir Henry Norman, who might have now been our Viceroy, wrote in 1867, so always, such a policy serves "personal objects," and is applauded from "Brevet-mania or K.C.B.-mania, rather than Russophobia." The forward creed of the large majority of Anglo-Indians is doubtless as much due to hopes of distinction as to the innate fighting propensities of all healthy Englishmen in the prime of life—for few are otherwise in India. Whether right or wrong, their belief has certainly small foundation from any close and independent study of the Indo-Russian problem.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF A GREAT ADVENTURE.

INVASION OF INDIA IMPRACTICABLE FROM PRESENT FRONTIER—RUSSIA'S FORCES IN CENTRAL ASIA WEAK—SUFFICIENT FOR LOCAL PURPOSES —WHAT TRAVELLERS SEE AND DO—EXPENSE AND DIFFICULTIES OF SENDING REINFORCEMENTS FROM RUSSIA IN EUROPE TO CENTRAL ASIA—RUSSIAN PRESTIGE—HER LOSSES IN CENTRAL ASIA SMALL—SLAUGHTER OF TURKOMANS—LOMAKIN'S DISASTER AT GEOK TEPE—APPLICATION OF THE *DELENDA EST CARTHAGO* PRINCIPLE — WANT OF ROADS AND RAILWAYS IN CENTRAL ASIA — DEPENDENCE ON A SINGLE LINE UNSAFE — ANTECEDENT IMPROBABILITY OF AN INVASION OF INDIA—WARS NOT MADE ON BUSINESS PRINCIPLES—RUSSIA'S *RAISON D'ÊTRE* IN CENTRAL ASIA — RUSSIA'S POSITION STRONG FOR ANNOYANCE ALREADY — JOHN BULL BECOMING REASSURED AGAIN.

The invasion of India impracticable from Russia's present frontier.

It is sometimes assumed that because Russia has an immense army, and has completed her Trans-Caspian railway to Samarkand, she is in a position to concentrate 100,000 men near the Afghan frontier within a few weeks, or at most months, of the order being issued from St Petersburg, and, having made her dispositions, to advance into Afghanistan with a view to a march upon the Indus.

She might conceivably do so, were she to renounce for the time her aspirations in Europe, and employ her resources in effecting such a wasting movement. But having distributed her army of

invasion within striking distance of Herat, Maimana, and Mazār-i-Sharîf, the expense of maintaining it would be enormous, and increase with every mile traversed towards the objective.

To move an army from west to east of Russia like so much merchandise is easy on paper but difficult on land, where distances are vast, communications unsatisfactory, the country of concentration barren, and its climate, from extremes of heat and cold, so trying as to make campaigning—except in spring and autumn — prodigal of life. The latter objection is, however, little regarded by Russia, as human life is cheap throughout her empire. Her resources in men are practically unlimited, but in money so deficient that it is doubtful if she could sustain a two years' war in Afghanistan without bankruptcy.

Were she so adventurous as to attempt from her present frontier, with its defective communications, to push troops east of Herat and Afghan Turkestan, the enterprise would certainly fail.

To achieve the long-desired prize of Constantinople, Russia might any day risk the consequences of another war with Turkey. Her wars against that empire have always been holy wars, into which the nation has entered with the fervour of Crusaders; but a war against England, with India as the objective, would excite no enthusiasm, and be detested long before the troops had reached the front.

Most of Russia's army is located in her European

governments, particularly in Russian Poland. She has also large forces in the Caucasus, nominally exceeding 100,000 men on a peace footing; but, on the other hand, her troops in Central Asia and Siberia barely suffice to garrison the most important strategic points in those vast territories.

Distribution of Russia's army.

In Trans-Caspiana, a province larger than France, she has only 10,000 field troops, to which may be added 4000 men for railway and local services, engaged in occupations usually performed by civil *employés* and police. Her 10,000 soldiers garrison positions on the railway line alone, and are mostly concentrated at Ashkabad, the headquarters of the Government, and at Merv. The collective peace strength is officially[1] put at 14,137 men and 30 guns, and the war strength at 1500 more men and the same number of guns.

Troops in Trans-Caspiana.

The garrison is evidently barely sufficient to overawe Turkomania and Northern Persia, protect the Trans-Caspian line, and keep communications open with Turkestan. To employ any part of such a weak garrison without reinforcements from Europe or the Caucasus on an external adventure —*e.g.*, a *coup de main* on Herat—would be a risky operation. So hazardous would it be, that we may feel confident that before such a project is attempted Russia's Trans-Caspian forces will be materially augmented. If so, we shall have ample

[1] Information in text about Russia's forces in Central Asia is taken from 'Handbook of the Russian Troops in Asia,' 1890, prepared in the Intelligence Division of our War Office.

warning of the preparations for an aggression, which would probably not be attempted did Russia clearly understand that the violation of the Afghan frontier on any pretext whatever will be regarded as tantamount to a declaration of war against Great Britain.

Russia's Turkestan garrison.

In Turkestan—a tract, excluding the Kirghiz Steppes, nearly four times the size of the United Kingdom, with a large Musalman population concentrated in the few oases of an otherwise dreary and desiccating land—Russia's forces, militia included, amount to 27,000 men and 64 guns in peace, and 34,000 men and 68 guns in war. These troops are mostly located at Tashkend, the headquarters of the Government, and at Samarkand. The former town has a population of 120,000, the latter of 40,000. The small rich oases, of which they are the respective centres, probably contain ten times those numbers. In addition to its home duties, the Samarkand garrison has also to stand sentinel over two millions of Bokhariots. The rest of the Turkestan troops hold posts at Charjui and Kerki on the Oxus, whence Bokhara and Afghan Turkestan can be watched, and at Kokan, Andijân, and Margilan, towards Kashgar and the Chinese frontier. Small outposts are also maintained at Osh nearer Kashgar, and on the Murghab,[1] the most northern of the three Pamir contributaries which together form the Oxus.

[1] Another Murghab river is mentioned in this book at p. 110. It flows to Merv *viâ* Panjdeh of 1885 notoriety.

Isolation of troops in Turkestan.

It will be observed that the Turkestan garrison of 27,000 men is scattered in isolated positions unconnected as yet by railways or even roads, and beyond the reach, on an emergency, of reinforcements from the north, as the nearest Siberian cantonments are at Orenburg and Omsk, both about 1300 roadless miles from Tashkend. The Samarkand garrison, on the southern fringe of the province, is alone in touch with European Russia, from which it is separated by the 900 miles of Trans-Caspian railway and the width of the Caspian Sea, across which are Baku on its western and Astrakhan on its northern shore, both themselves desolate spots, drawing all their supplies from distant places.

Small number of Russia's forces in Central Asia.

The two provinces together, including Bokhara and Khiva, and excluding the Kirghiz Steppes, have a population of six millions, an area as large as that of British India, and a garrison of only 41,000 men, of whom a large proportion are local corps and unreliable.

The men are generally inferior as soldiers to those serving in European Russia, and their officers are conspicuously so—Central Asia being used as a penal country or place of voluntary exile for obnoxious and indebted officers. Once settled down in his place of banishment or self-imposed exile, isolation, idleness, and independence lower a man's sense of discipline and tend to his general demoralisation.

Only sufficient for local duties.

From the above facts and figures it is obvious that Russia's strength in Central Asia is the mini-

mum sufficient to keep order among the subject populations, and that reinforcements can only be drawn from Tiflis, a journey of many hundred miles with two breaks in it, as the Caspian Sea has to be crossed; or from Russia to Europe, a longer journey with four breaks in it, as, besides the Caspian, the Volga or Black Sea gaps have to be traversed.

What travellers see and do.

Travellers who do the Central Asian grand tour sometimes write of the country as "one vast camp," and express surprise that from end to end of their several weeks' journey they never set eyes on a civilian. Such observers only survey the land from the windows of a railway carriage or house in a cantonment, along the one line of occupation, and forget, perhaps, that all work ordinarily done by civilians is performed in Russian Central Asia by soldiers in uniform.

From Uzun Ada, the port of debarkation on the Caspian, the traveller journeys by rail to Samarkand (900 miles), thence by *tarantass* 190 miles to Tashkend, and then returns by the same route.

Russian want of money and want of energy illustrated.

Considering that Tashkend is the headquarters of the Government, Samarkand the terminus of the Trans-Caspian railway, and both large cantonments and cities, any other European Government but that of Russia would, presumably, have at least connected the two by a bridged and metalled road within a few years of their annexation. But in rough, easy-going, impecunious Russia there are few roads, and little money is available to make them; hence rapid com-

munication between Samarkand and Tashkend is by *tarantass*, a sort of long box swung on wheels, a springless prototype of the Indian *dâk-gâri*, but of greater strength, as it has to be forced along the track by three horses driven abreast, has to ford rivers, plough through deep sand and mud, and resist shocks which would shatter the superior Indian vehicle to splinters.

Expense and difficulty of reinforcing Central Asian garrison.

Let us assume that, in view of expected complications with Afghanistan and England, Russia hurriedly reinforces her Central Asian garrison by 20,000 good troops, half drawn from Southern Russia in Europe, and half from the Caucasus. All would pass to the front through Uzun Ada, the starting-point of the Trans-Caspian railway. The contingent from Europe would be shipped on the Volga between Kazan and Saratov, and carried down in shallow-draught steamers to Astrakhan, several hundred miles, whence they would be transshipped to sea-steamers, and conveyed across the Caspian 600 miles to Uzun Ada. The Tiflis troops would be railed to Baku (300 miles), and thence conveyed by sea 200 miles to the port of debarkation. All commissariat and ordnance stores would have to be laid in beforehand, or carried with each detachment, as from the western shore of the Caspian to ultimate destination the thousand and odd miles of route produce practically nothing, —neither forage, nor fuel, nor corn.

As in Skobeleff's expedition against Geok Tepe in 1881, corn could be procured from Persian Khora-

san, and camel transport from Khiva. Turkomania would also supply camels in large numbers.

But Skobeleff's troops numbered only 7000 men, and the expedition was one of a few months' duration. Commissariat arrangements for forces nearly three times as numerous, on the threshold of events which might detain them for years in tracts of little or no productive capacity, would, even with the help of the Trans-Caspian railway, be a severe strain on Russia's finances.

Increasing difficulties from Uzun Ada onwards.

Difficulties would increase with every mile traversed. Caspian marine transport merely suffices for ordinary traffic, and would, unless largely supplemented, be unequal to the services required from it. Landing a single battalion even at Uzun Ada is still a slow business. The bay is shallow, is frozen over in winter, and the railway terminal shed was until lately at some distance from the shore, the intervening space being deep sand. A small pier has been made since 1890, and the train runs alongside; but even so, the arrangements are rough. The reinforcements would doubtless be timed to arrive at Uzun Ada in successive detachments, each being worked off soon after its arrival. There would be no general rendezvous at the small port; but converging, as the troops would, from distant points after long journeys by river, rail, and sea, and having to proceed on a single track of poor construction, incapable of carrying heavy or quick trains, and deficient in rolling stock, miscalculations

of time would be sure to occur, and crowding and confusion at Uzun Ada would be inevitable.

The breaking out of cholera or typhus there would not be improbable, and might upset all calculations.

If, then, to move 20,000 men from Russia in Europe and Tiflis to the neighbourhood of the Oxus would be a task of great expense and nice adjustment, we may suppose that the transport and maintenance of an army five times that number would present almost insuperable difficulties for an empire whose officers are not business precisionists like the Germans, but a careless happy-go-lucky set of good fellows, who never do to-day what can be deferred until to-morrow, and put off to-morrow as long as possible.

Russia has prestige, not strength, in Central Asia.

The fact is, Russia's position in Central Asia is not really strong, but her prestige is great. Since she began her career of conquest in the fifties, her only determined opponent has been nature—waterless wastes to be covered, hot summers, severe winters. Thus, in most expeditions, success was assured at small loss as soon as commissariat difficulties were overcome. Wherever failure occurred it was due, as in the Khivan expedition of 1840, to the collapse of transport and commissariat, or, as at Geok Tepe in 1879, to the incompetence of the general commanding, and the insubordination and jealousies of his officers.

Her losses in Central Asia insignificant.

Geok Tepe excluded, Russia's whole war losses in Central Asia are insignificant.

In sieges and battles combined they were officially reported, up to the capture of the Akhal Tekke refuge, at 154 killed and 966 wounded—a number no larger than our casualties in one frontier "little war" known as the "Ambela expedition." The Geok or Denjis Tepe *aoul* had been assaulted unsuccessfully in 1879 by General Lomakin.

Indiscriminate slaughter of Turkomans at Geok Tepe.

In that expedition Russia lost 450 men killed and wounded. The work of taking the Turkoman refuge was next intrusted to Skobeleff, the self-advertising hero of Plevna, and most practical general Russia possessed. After twenty-four days' siege he stormed and captured the place on January 24, 1881, slaughtering upwards of 8000 Turkomans —men, women, and children indiscriminately. He had 7000 troops and 60 guns. The Turkomans may have numbered 45,000, of whom half were women and children. Throughout the whole campaign Skobeleff lost 283 killed, and 689 wounded; the enemy nearly half their numbers.

Naturally such wholesale destruction pacified Turkomania. It completed the conquest of Central Asia.

The Russian plan of subjugating hostile tribes.

Humanity apart, the Russian system of subjugating Asiatic tribes is cheaper, quicker, more thorough, and ultimately more bloodless than ours, which by its persistent forbearance fails to impress rude peoples. The Russian plan is to treat the enemy as wild beasts, to destroy them root and branch, and spare neither sex nor age so long as any resistance is offered.

How the Turkomans were conquered.

Take, for instance, the history of the conquest of Turkomania: three slaughters sufficed to effect it. After the Khivan campaign of 1863, General Kaufman deliberately imposed an impossible fine on the Yomud Turkomans, a settled and comparatively inoffensive tribe, whom it was thought advisable to terrorise in order to impress their less civilised brethren and win decorations for the general and his officers. The fine not being paid, Kaufman had the Yomud settlements surrounded, and ordered the tribe to be exterminated — an order said to have been willingly obeyed by the Cossacks. Again, in September 1879, General Lomakin penned in 15,000 men and 5000 women and children of the Akhal Tekkes in their intrenched camp at Geok Tepe, and for six hours kept up a continuous fire from twelve guns on its population, shooting down or driving back with cavalry all fugitives, even women and children. As the general afterwards reported in his despatch, "the effect of our artillery was terrible. The Turkoman prisoners say that several thousands of their people were killed."

Lomakin's disaster at Geok Tepe.

Seeing the havoc caused by his guns, and mistaking desperation for panic, the general, impatient for the honours of exclusive victory, ordered an immediate assault, although a large body of his troops had not yet reached the scene of action. The battalions advanced precipitately without their scaling-ladders, were unable to mount the rampart, turned in disorder, and fled. A panic ensued, and the expedition retreated to the Caspian, where dysentery,

fever, and scurvy decimated the already demoralised troops. The crowning slaughter was two years later, when, as we have seen, Skobeleff, a believer in the *delenda est Carthago* principle, blotted out the Akhal Tekkes, and so retrieved Russia's lost prestige and subjugated the Turkomans. Since then Russia has had no battles to fight in Central Asia, for the slaughters of the Afghans at Panjdeh in 1885 and at Somatash in 1892 were massacres, not fights.

Want of railway communications in Central Asia.

From the foregoing we may assume that until Russia consolidates her position in Central Asia by railway extension, road-making, and the improvement of her communications with her European bases, she is in no position to seize Herat, or occupy Afghan Turkestan, except on the improbable hypothesis that such action would not involve her in a war with Great Britain. She is a poor and almost insolvent country, and for some years to come has her hands full, if peace continue, for she is committed to the construction of her Siberian railway, which will link St Petersburg with Vladivostok, the Baltic with the Pacific.

Railways under construction and projected.

That colossal enterprise is being rapidly pushed forward, but will swallow up for the next six or more years nearly every rouble which can be scraped together for railway construction throughout the empire. When completed it will not materially improve Russia's mobility in Central Asia, for there will still remain a roadless space of about 1500 miles between Orenburg, a large cantonment and

best point of junction on the Siberian line, and Samarkand, the present terminus of the Trans-Caspian railway. When Russia finds time and money for improving her communications with Merv and Turkestan, she will presumably extend the Trans-Caspian line to the Ferghana valley, making Margilan for the time her terminus towards the Pamirs and connecting it with Tashkend. She will also make a branch line from Merv to Panjdeh, a small work, but advisable as preliminary to the seizure of Herat or Afghan Turkestan. She will finally gradually connect her Siberian with her Central Asian system—an extension which will be of itself a large undertaking, involving the construction of 1300 miles of line, much of it through a difficult or desert country. She has thus in all more than 2000 miles of railway construction to accomplish before she has a second railway route into Central Asia, or is in the most favourable position for her next advance. If she defers that advance until her communications with her European bases are satisfactory, India has many years before her wherein to complete her defences. The chances are, however, that before connection is completed between Samarkand, Tashkend, Margilan, and Orenburg, or other point on the Siberian railway, a conjuncture will arise which will precipitate Russia's next forward move.

Probable small extensions.

In that case she would run an extension—if not already made—from Dushak, her railway station nearest Herat, up the Tejend (Hari Rud) to her

frontier in the vicinity of Herat, another up the Murghab from Merv to Panjdeh, and a third from Charjui on the Oxus to Kerki, her outpost towards Mazār-i-Sharîf on the same river. To meet the increased traffic on the main line, she would have to double it, or re-lay parts at least in a permanent way: at present the sleepers are merely spiked down into the soil, or permanent way where there is one.

Dependence on a single line of rail unsafe.

Even so, her troops at the front would not be secure. It would at the best be unwise to intrust the safety of the army of invasion to a single line of communication, running for 600 miles through a desert, roamed over by Turkomans and flanked on its southern side by ranges of mountains inhabited by wild tribes; and yet, to attack Afghanistan backed by Great Britain, the risk would have to be run, or Persia's northern province of Khorasan must first be annexed and held in strength—an enterprise of small difficulty but considerable expense, which will presumably be carried out before the invasion of India is really attempted. In no case is it likely that we should be able, by the attraction of large rewards for good destructive work, to seriously dislocate traffic. There are few bridges on the line, and removed rails are easily replaced. Moreover, any tampering with the line would be followed by such exemplary punishment, that after a time men would not be found to risk the blotting out of their villages for a few thousand rupees.

On the Turkestan side Russia's communications

would be quite safe, did she defer action until she had completed railway connection with her Siberian line. But on that side, too, distances to bases would be immense.

Turkestan and Bokhara would, in a good year supply corn, but both countries have dry climates and are gradually desiccating, as evidenced by the contraction of the irrigated area, by the encroachments of the sand deserts and the evaporation of hundreds of lakes.[1] There is consequently little surplus produce wherewith to feed an army, its followers, and its tens of thousands of quadrupeds.

Antecedent improbability of a Russian invasion of India.

It is clear, then, that to seriously menace India through Afghanistan, Russia would have to spend many millions of roubles on improving her communications with Europe. Her roads and railways would all be strategic lines, and only maintainable at a loss. Is it likely, then, that impecunious and overtaxed Russia, with several long-cherished ambitions, inside and outside the European half of her empire, unsatisfied from want of funds and opportunities, will, within a politically measurable time, spend, say, a hundred millions of roubles in order to complete a system of unremunerative railways in Central Asia, because such lines would strengthen her offensive power against India? And is it likely that, having completed some of these lines—*e.g.*, the extension from Samarkand to a point of junction

[1] The fact is mentioned by most Central Asian travellers, but is prominently stated in 'Russian Central Asia,' by Dr Henry Landsell, D.D., author of 'Through Siberia.'

with the Siberian railway now in progress—responsible Russian statesmen would advise the Tzar to risk disaster by beginning a distant and unpopular war, for Russians only hate Germans and fight with religious fervour against Turks? Such a war would certainly exhaust the empire, and might upset the whole fabric of the existing system of government.

Wars not made on business principles.

Calculations, however, cannot be based on such considerations. Wars are rarely undertaken on business principles. Sentiment, short-sighted selfishness, or misconception of conditions, has often plunged a nation into a useless war from which it was certain to emerge crippled and without material advantage. Russia's last war with Turkey is a case in point.

A political conjuncture may arise at any time—for instance, a war between England and France—which might induce Russia to occupy Herat and Mazār-i-Sharîf, or either of those places, and there await developments.

Russia's *raison d'être* in Central Asia.

We must not forget that the sole object of Russia's hitherto profitless advance into Central Asia has been to enable her to bring effective pressure to bear on England through Afghanistan, or, as Mr Curzon epigrammatically puts it, "to keep England quiet in Europe by keeping her employed in Asia." She even succeeded in doing so in 1838, 1856, and 1878, long before she had joined frontiers with Afghanistan. The nightmare of Russophobia has cost India upwards of seventy millions sterling already, has lately caused us to add 10,000 British and 20,000 native

troops to our Indian army, and is making us spend large sums annually upon defence works, fortifications, roads, and railways on our North-Western frontier.

Russia's position already powerful for annoyance.

Now that Russia holds the Oxus line and has Herat and Afghan Turkestan at her mercy—had she only to count on the Afghans as opponents—her ability to coerce England through India, or, what is much the same thing, to drain the finances of India on military expenditure, is much greater than it was fifteen or more years ago. Then she could only bluff us, and repeatedly succeeded at the game; now she can whenever she pleases force us, at small expenditure to herself, "to eat dirt," as the Indians say,—and eat it we should, did we acquiesce in her next forward move,—or fight her at great initial disadvantage to ourselves: and she will certainly use her first opportunity to do one or the other, should England show any disposition to revert to the party seesaw policy which obtained until Russia's seizure of Merv, "the key of Herat," in 1884. That event filled even English Russophils with amazement, and convinced them that were Russia allowed to advance still nearer to India, the continued good government of that dependency would be made intolerably expensive from the increase of expenditure on defence preparations which the still closer proximity of a great military Power would entail.

John Bull becoming reassured again.

Russia has now held Merv for ten years, and excepting the splutters over the "Panjdeh incident"

(1885) and the Pamir Somatash massacre (1892), nothing has since occurred to excite English suspicions. On the contrary, John Bull is again being lulled into a feeling of security and trust in the honest and honourable intentions of his great rival in Asia. In addition, is not the Amir, after long estrangement, on excellent terms with us, and the once fanatical tribes over whom he rules gradually shaping towards our long-desired ideal of "a strong, united, and friendly Afghanistan" in close alliance with us? Have not India's North-West defences been made almost impregnable at Quetta and Rawalpindi, and do not our railways run to Peshawar, to New Chaman, within sixty miles of Kandahar, and laterally up and down the Indus? John Bull is correct in his facts, no doubt, but not in his inferences. The Amir's is a single life, and a bad life too, and after him may come chaos, and behind our frontier defences are 300 millions of Indians, many of whose educated men watch the advance of Russia with mingled curiosity and apprehension, speculating with their misty perceptions if the Tzar will some day be their "liberator," as he was of the Bulgarians, and give the Indian "nation" a national government.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END OF A BUFFER STATE.

QUESTIONS REPEATED—WHY RUSSIA SHOULD ADVANCE—CONSEQUENCES TO INDIA—SHOULD WE ADVANCE?—INDIA STRONG ON THE BALUCHISTAN SIDE—HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION—THREE ROUTES TO INDIA NORTH OF QUETTA—THE KARRACHI ROUTE ALWAYS OPEN TO US IN ANY CASE—INDIA ONLY ASSAILABLE *VIÂ* KABUL—OCCUPATION OF NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN NECESSARY FOR RUSSIA—EFFECT OF A RUSSIAN FAILURE ON INDIAN OPINION—COST OF OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN—COST OF OUR LAST AFGHAN WAR—RUSSIA AT KABUL AND KANDAHAR—EFFECT ON INDIA—RUSSIA ON ENGLISH RULE IN INDIA—HER ABSURD PLAN OF CAMPAIGN IN 1878—WHERE TO ADVANCE TO—THE HINDU KUSH ONLY LINE FOR A CONTERMINOUS FRONTIER—REASONS FOR OUR HOLDING KANDAHAR—RAILWAY LINKING UP OF INDIA AND RUSSIA—SHOULD WE ADVANCE TO KABUL?—ARGUMENTS OF NO-ADVANCE SCHOOL—MUTUAL EXHAUSTION—POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING TAXATION—THE RAISING OF INDIAN POSTAL RATES—THE WHOLE QUESTION ONE OF MONEY—USELESS HOLES IN OUR ARMOUR—REPLY TO NO-ADVANCE ARGUMENTS—BATTLE OF SADOWA—COST OF HOLDING KABUL—OUR AFGHAN WARS—AUTHOR'S OPINION—OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THE AMIR—WE CANNOT FIGHT BEYOND THE HINDU KUSH—OUR DUTY AND INTEREST COINCIDE—IS RUSSIA VULNERABLE FOR ENGLAND?—THE AMIR'S ARMY—WE WANT SOLDIERS, NOT FORTS—SPECULATION IS OF SMALL VALUE.

Questions repeated.

IT is now possible, perhaps, to form an opinion on the questions raised in the opening chapter. We have first to consider whether it is to the interest of Russia or of England, or of both, further to reduce the still intervening space between their respective present frontiers.

Reasons for a renewed advance by Russia.

That Russia should do so is obvious, otherwise she has small *raison d'être* in Central Asia. She is not yet within striking distance of India, but might be so were Herat and Afghan Turkestan in her possession, and both of these territories would prefer Tzar to Amir for master. Russia would doubtless occupy them without delay, as she could at practically no cost to herself, were she not restrained by the belief that such action would involve her in war with Great Britain. Her advance to the watershed of the Hindu Kush and valley of the Hari Rud would force us largely to increase our army in India —particularly its British portion — and either to occupy strategic points in Cis-Hindu-Kush Afghanistan, thereby forestalling our rival, and throwing the theatre of possible war well back from the plains of India, or to sit still within our present frontier and there await the enemy—a policy which Afghanistan and India would interpret as defeat before the battle.

Consequences to India.

Either consummation would repay Russia for all her outlay in conquering and holding Central Asia, because our augmented defence charges, and the closer approach of a great military Power, would render a large increase of taxation necessary, owing to which, and the general unrest from Russia's proximity, the continued good government of India by a handful of Englishmen would be hardly possible. Behind Russia's frontier would be the fatherland, fairly secure communications, and exhaustless supplies of men and material; behind ours 300 mil-

lions of excited, fully taxed Asiatics, already impressed with a belief in our impotence and Russia's power. The nearer the outposts of the rival nations approximate to a conterminous frontier, the larger must be our armaments, the heavier the taxation, and the greater the consequent agitation in India.

If we do not fight to maintain the present frontier, should we advance?

It is, then, clearly to Russia's interest to push on to the Hindu Kush, and to England's to keep her within her present frontier lines.

If, however, circumstances oblige or induce England to condone Russia's advance to that limit—the recognised bourn of her further expansion towards India—we should probably be stronger against invasion, and spend less money on defence, were we to occupy and fortify strategic positions beyond our present frontier, than were we to sit still and await attack inside it. The question then arises, Where are those positions to be found? We may assume that the existing scheme of frontier defence will be carried out in the next few years, unless delayed by the fulfilment of the vaticinations of currency Cassandras—India's insolvency.

India secure on the Baluchistan side.

On the Baluchistan side India is now practically secure. Quetta is a strong intrenched position which, like Rawalpindi, will shortly be armed with heavy guns. It is 300 miles west of the Indus, and is protected by nature on all sides by a barren waterless country. Kandahar is 150 miles north-west of Quetta and under 60 from New Chaman, both of which are in railway communication with Karrachi and Bombay. Fighting about Quetta or

beyond would have small effect on the native mind, for to Indians generally Baluchistan is a foreign country, far west of theirs.

Hypothetical situation.

Now let us suppose that Russia is in possession of Herat, has extended her railway to that place, and has advanced in strength 400 miles to Kandahar—outstripping her railway connection for that distance—with a view to invade India, or rather in the expectation that by the capture of some vulnerable point on or near the Indus she will excite a general rising against us. Let us also suppose that, owing to financial difficulties from the collapse of silver, war with France, or any other cause, we are awaiting attack inside our present frontier, and that our defences are only so far improved that works now in progress have been completed—*i.e.*, lateral railway communication between our frontier cantonments perfected, heavy guns mounted on the intrenched positions of Attock, Rawalpindi, and Quetta, and a similar position selected, strengthened, and fully garrisoned somewhere between Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan, with a view to cover the approaches to the Indus by the Gumal, Tochi, and Kurram routes. Let us also suppose that, beyond supplying the trans-border tribes with cheap rifles and money, we have reverted to the old non-intervention policy.

Natural difficulties of Kandahar-Quetta route.

Under such conditions, even unopposed, Russian progress from Kandahar by the Quetta-Bolan route would be slow and costly, because, unless accompanied *pari passu* by a railway, commissariat and

transport difficulties would be serious, and increase with the distance traversed from Kandahar. Suppose now that for some reason we abandon Quetta, destroy our railway lines, and retreat towards Multan and Hyderabad in Sindh. The invader would still be in danger of collapse from starvation and the cutting of his communications, and still have after leaving Quetta 300 miles of barren mountains and desert to traverse before reaching Multan, our nearest vulnerable point, at which supplies would be procurable in abundance.

But opposed as the Russian army would be by a perfectly equipped force operating from the secure base of Quetta, the invaders would have to seek another entrance into India farther north. The nearest feasible approaches would be by what are known as the Gumal, Tochi, and Kurram routes, which are camel-tracks up and down a series of stony torrent-beds, with a number of *kotals* or depressions on divides to be crossed. These *kotals* range from 2000 to 7000 feet above the general torrent-level of their neighbourhoods, and when the last is traversed the descent is into the narrow channel of the river, which on the Indian side gives the name to the whole route. Now to march an army to the Indus by any one of these routes — the shortest of which, from the Kandahar-Ghazni-Kabul track to the nearest Trans-Indus British cantonment, is about 200 miles—would necessitate preparations on a vast scale and a lavish expenditure out of all proportion to the probable result. Each one of

Three difficult routes to India north of Quetta approach.

these routes debouches upon a frontier cantonment and fort—the Gumal upon Dera Ismail Khan, the Tochi upon Bannu, and the Kurram, after the Miranzai valley has been traversed, upon Kohat. From end to end of the several routes the invading army would have to carry upon baggage-animals all supplies, even fodder and fuel, as the country to be marched over is rough and barren. The Gumal route would not be attempted because exposed to flank attack from our Baluchistan and Zhob valley garrisons, and opening upon an agriculturally poor country, twelve or more marches from any of our vulnerable centres. The Tochi and Kurram routes would offer more attraction, as the former leads at once into the rich Bannu valley, and in good years Marwat grain-country; whilst the latter runs for six or seven marches through an agricultural district and debouches on Kohat, only one march from the irrigated and valuable Peshawar district, the acquisition of which would bring home to all Northern India that the Panjab had been successfully invaded. But to make use of the Tochi and Kurram approaches, the possession of Herat and Southern Afghanistan alone would be insufficient, as those routes begin about 250 miles north-west of Kandahar. The enemy would presumably have already occupied Afghan Turkestan.

The Karrachi route always open to us.

The advance from Herat to Kandahar without the previous occupation of Northern Afghanistan would have been decided upon, under the belief that a concurrent rising in the Panjab, or more probably

N.W. Provinces, would render our frontier positions untenable. Such an expectation would prove fallacious, because even in the extreme and improbable case of a widespread insurrection throughout the Gangetic valley, the Karrachi route through Sindh would remain open to us, and is in fact the shortest, quickest, and best line for forwarding reinforcements from England to Lahore, Rawalpindi, and the frontier stations.

India only assailable *viâ* Kabul.

The Russian Commander-in-Chief would now be in a dilemma. The calculations on which his rush upon the Indus from Herat had been based would have proved erroneous. He would have to prepare a new plan of campaign.

Occupation of Northern Afghanistan necessary for Russia.

He would now recognise, on a review of his position, that the only feasible approach to India is through Northern Afghanistan *viâ* Kabul. He would thus have to conquer or win over the Afghans. In either case he would have to occupy the Bamian-Kabul-Jalalabad route in force; for whether the tribes were with or against him, he would be unable to trust them. They would, until terrorised by repeated exemplary punishments in Circassian or Turkestan fashion, plunder his convoys, murder stragglers and small parties, and destroy his road-post garrisons whenever opportunity offered. On the Russian side, disappointment at the failure of the first venture, the demand for large reinforcements, private letters from the front describing the hardships of the campaign, the dreary aspect of the country, the dearth of supplies, the trying

extremes of the climate, the general home-sickness of the troops, would make the further prosecution of the attempt at invasion unpopular throughout Russia.

Effect of a Russian failure on India.

On the Indian side the same causes would dispel the impression of the invincible power of the Tzar, give heart to the weak and doubting, silence all prophets of disaster, and stimulate the princes and peoples of India to a great effort to push Russia back into the Turkoman desert, and take some material guarantee against the possibility of further attempts at disturbing the peace of our Indian empire. It would be remembered that Russia, throughout her advance towards India, has never yet been opposed by a warlike people who knew how to fight; that in the Afghans she would for the first time in her career of conquest meet tribes as strong and patriotic as the Circassians, but better armed, better disciplined, and far more fanatical than they were; that the Afghans have recently been twice blooded by Russia, once at Panjdeh in 1885 and once at Somatash in the Pamirs in 1892; and that they and their unfortunate Amir, Sher Ali, were also deceived and decoyed into national disaster by the same Power in 1878-80.

Cost of occupation of Afghanistan to Russia.

Thus it may be presumed that if India continue peaceful and sympathetically governed, the attempt to invade her would certainly fail, unless Russia first subjugated and afterwards strongly held Northern Afghanistan, an operation which would lock up 25,000 or more troops, and be alone an annual charge of four or five millions sterling.

Our own last Afghan war of 1878-80 cost us twenty-five millions sterling, employed an army of 50,000 men, who were at no time masters of more of the country than what was covered by their rifle-bullets by day and the circle of pickets round their camps at night. The towns of Kabul and Kandahar, and the line of communications with Peshawar, 180 miles from Kabul, and with Sibi in Sindh, 244 miles from Kandahar, were alone held, and on two occasions a large force marched 328 miles between the northern and southern capitals of Afghanistan. The facts of that miserable war, however, afford a poor criterion for forming a judgment on what it would cost Russia or ourselves to annex and hold Afghanistan. In 1878-80 Indian politics were the sport of the contending parties at Westminster, and the Afghans were compelled to oppose us *en masse*, because we would not declare that we meant to retain their country permanently. Had we advanced, as Russia does, on the "*J'y suis, j'y reste*" principle, half Afghanistan would have sided with us from the first, and tribal opposition would have been much weaker.

Cost of our last Afghan war to us.

It is conceivable that India continuing undisturbed within and wisely governed, Russia might successfully invade her, were the Tzar's troops first established at both Kandahar and Kabul, with railway communication up to those advanced positions. Even without actual invasion, Russia's presence so near the Indus, and the extra taxation raised to meet India's heavier military expenditure, would

Effect on India of Russia at Kabul and Kandahar.

certainly unsettle the native mind; and if so, Russia's farther advance towards the Indus might possibly set the whole peninsula in a blaze, and be the knell of our Indian empire. At the same time, the exact converse is possible. Contact with Russia, and a nearer and clearer perception of the comparative demerits, for the subject population, of the Russian and English systems of government, might awaken an active loyalty to the British connection throughout India, which would make our rule, if not more popular by contrast with what would replace it, at least more necessary, in competent native opinion, than it had ever been in the past. If so, Russia's position in Afghanistan would be embarrassing for her. The drain upon her resources of maintaining that position might eventually lead to her evacuating a country of rocks and stones, which produces nothing but fierce and fanatical mountaineers, united in a common hatred of all foreign domination, whether English or Russian.

Russian opinion on English rule in India.

It was, and may still be, a fixed idea with Russian experts on the Indo-Russian question, that our rule in India is a tyranny, our taxation regulated extortion, and the people so ripe for insurrection that, as Skobeleff wrote in 1877, "it is only necessary to penetrate to a single point upon the Indian frontier in order to bring about a general rising." Since that was written, a dozen or more distinguished Russian officers and civilians have toured in Upper India, and expressed themselves astonished at the evident contentment and pros-

perity of the natives, their goodwill towards their Government, and the splendid material and discipline of our Indian troops, as well as the *camaraderie* existing between them and their English brothers-in-arms.

It is possible, then, that what was the conviction of ignorance in 1877 has been since, to some extent, corrected by knowledge of facts, and that a truer appreciation of the strength of our position in India is growing up in Russia.

Absurd Russian plan of campaign in 1878.

Whether so or not, Russia acted on her then fixed conception of the situation in 1878. Whilst the Congress of the Great Powers was sitting at Berlin, a Russian council of war sat outside Constantinople, obtained the Tzar's consent — as a set-off against Disraeli's summons of Indian troops to Malta — to the despatch of three small columns of Central Asian troops to operate on the Pamirs and Afghan Turkestan. All three actually started on their several adventures, whilst the infatuated Amir Sher Ali received a Russian Mission at Kabul, and signed a treaty of alliance with Russia—which was, of course, repudiated as soon as it had achieved its object of committing him to a war with us. Had the treaty of Berlin not been signed, and war thereby averted, the Russian project was to organise and arm Turkomans and Afghans, and hurl them against us in India, the population of which was assumed to be already disaffected.

The whole plan of campaign was preposterous, born of the ignorance of outside facts which char-

acterises most Russians. Had the armed rabble of the mountains descended to meet our regular troops in the plains, the bigger their swarms the larger would have been their slaughter, the more dangerous their temper for the Russians. Probably, as soon as armed, they would have preferred the easier, safer, and more remunerative game of turning upon their Russian inciters to martyrdom, and have killed and plundered them, until the adventure—had its execution been seriously pushed—would have recoiled on its projectors, and ended in a disastrous fiasco for Russian interests in Central Asia.

Where to find our forward positions.

It is impossible yet to suggest a clear answer to the question as to where our best forward positions are to be found in the unhappy event of Russia's annexation of Herat and Afghan Turkestan being condoned by Great Britain. What we want are the strategic positions nearest to our political frontier which will give us the greatest strength at the minimum of increased expenditure, and it is for military strategists to convince the British nation where exactly those desiderata are to be found.

The Hindu Kush the only line for a conterminous frontier.

Russians of all shades of opinion would without hesitation pronounce in favour of the line of the Hindu Kush. Many of our best men would make a similar pronouncement, arguing that, as a fresh delimitation of boundary would be required, no other is possible than the great ethnic and physical barrier erected by nature herself. There can hardly be room for doubt that if ever a conterminous frontier become a necessity, the Hindu Kush must be

the common boundary. But before that extremity arises, it is almost certain that, should we fail in our duty of arresting Russia's nearer approach, a contracted Afghanistan will be defined, and form for a time a buffer State between us, and that the line suggested above will be adopted for its frontier on the side of Russian territory.

Assuming then, for the present, that Russia is in recognised possession of Herat, or of one or more positions in Afghan Turkestan, and that, after long diplomatic warfare, the watershed of the Hindu Kush—the Bamian route excepted—has been delimited as the new boundary between dismembered Afghanistan and Russia in Central Asia, can we suggest reasons for forthwith advancing to that line or stopping short of it in any particular locality?

Reasons for our holding Kandahar.

To deal first with Southern Afghanistan,—the balance of argument appears to be in favour of our occupation of Kandahar, the line of the Helmand being taken as our new political frontier. Did we not do so, Russia undoubtedly would, as soon as she had consolidated her position in the Herat valley. By pushing on to Kandahar, she would reopen the twice-delimited frontier question, obtain a conterminous boundary with India at small cost to herself —thus making her disturbing presence felt throughout Baluchistan and the Suliman mountains, both already within our actual or political frontier—cut India off from the direct caravan route to Persia, establish herself in a productive and potentially if

not actually rich country, and gain a dominating influence throughout Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan, and great political prestige throughout India. Were we to anticipate such a move by garrisoning and fortifying Kandahar and extending the Quetta-Peshin railway to it — only sixty miles of plain—we should be masters of the resources of the revenue-paying parts of Southern Afghanistan, hold a good defensible line, and have between us and Russian territory a broad belt of desert—the Dasht-i-Bakwa, and wastes of the same kind, which would form a sort of natural glacis to our Helmand front. Our action would add little or nothing to our military expenditure, as the Baluchistan garrison would be considerably reduced, and our troops would be serving in a cheaper, richer, and better supplied province than Baluchistan. Between New Chaman, our outpost nearest Kandahar, and the Helmand, the country is practically open, and the population submissive and well disposed to our rule.

As minor considerations, would be the facts that Kandahar is a trading centre for the best populated plains and valleys of Afghanistan, and that the persecuted and still partially independent Hazaras would be brought into touch with us, and give us the command of the direct postal and sometimes military road through their mountains between Herat and Kabul.

We should, of course, prefer to make the advance by arrangement with the Government still ruling at

Kabul over Northern Afghanistan. Such an arrangement would present no difficulty, because the Kabul authorities would recognise that a friendly neighbour who would pay some lakhs annually for what he could take for nothing, would be better than a hostile neighbour who would pay them nothing and be continually threatening to destroy their national life.

No railway wanted between Herat and Kandahar.

With Russia in Herat and England in Kandahar, each being the terminus of their respective railway systems, the question would arise as to whether the two nations could not sufficiently trust each other to link India to Europe by rail-bridging the remaining gap of 390 level miles. The reasons against tunnelling or bridging the English Channel would apply with far greater force against such a linking together of India and Russia. Fiscally and politically, such a step would make our position in India almost untenable.

Our advance towards Kabul dependent on circumstances.

As to Northern Afghanistan, the advisability of our forthwith advancing into it or standing fast would largely depend on its internal condition and the state of Russian preparations inside her new province. It is probable that Russia would hold it as economically as possible, and be unable, even if willing, for some years at least, to spend money on roads or railway extension. It is also probable that the tribes of Northern Afghanistan would, in the presence of a common danger, continue united under some strong Amir, whose power would be real. So long as such conditions obtained we might

leave the buffer State to stand alone and intact, merely subsidising the Amir, strengthening his authority, and cultivating the goodwill and confidence of the tribes in every way open to us. We might also—and this would possibly be found to be the safer arrangement—at once lease part of the route to Kabul from the Amir and Ghilzai tribes who control it, advance our posts to the neighbourhood of Jalalabad, Jagdalak of unhappy memory, or even Gandamak, complete railway communication up to our most forward positions, or better, with the consent of the Amir, to Kabul itself, and thus secure ourselves against the possibility of Russia's seizing Bamian and the Irak and Shibar passes over the Koh-i-Baba, which are the only practicable approaches to Kabul from the west.

Arguments of no-advance school.

The opponents of any further advance on our part towards Kabul or beyond, base their arguments partly on financial and partly on political considerations. "We understand," they say, "that the defensive scheme of the forward or military school in India and England is, that in the event of the seizure by Russia of Herat and Afghan Turkestan, our field army should operate west of the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line, which would be held in strength by us and constitute our second line of defence, the third and last being that loosely known as the line of the Indus. Unless the supposed field army is to fight Russia on her own ground in the Hari Rud valley and Afghan Turkestan, the idea of pushing such an army west of

the Hindu Kush has no meaning. The advocates of such a policy pay insufficient regard to financial considerations. Where are the annual millions to be found to maintain the occupation of the Kabul-Kandahar line with a field army thrown forwards into space westwards thereof? And if such an army were to defeat that of Russia at some point on her advanced line, what would England gain? The defeated troops would fall back twenty, fifty, or a hundred miles *reculants pour mieux sauter*, and that would be all. Behind them would be the soil of Russia, every step backwards contracting expenses and cheapening supplies. Behind us would be the fickle Afghans, ready always to murder and plunder either English or Russians, whichever side was beaten or gave them a chance, every step westwards augmenting our expenditure, lengthening our line of communications, and attenuating our force at the front. Moreover, we should have to fight chiefly with British troops, as the Indians hate service in Afghanistan. In 1879 and 1880 recruiting almost ceased in India. Where, then, is our field army to come from, and who is to pay for it?

Mutual exhaustion inevitable.

"Two or three years of such a war would reduce India to insolvency, and convert every John Bull to John Bright's 'perish India' theory. Have the advocates of the advance-to-Herat and fight-it-out-on-the-Oxus school forgotten their history? Since the Napoleonic campaigns in the beginning of this century, fought in home countries full of supplies,

when armaments were comparatively light and uncostly, has the theatre of any great war been at a distance from water or railway communications? Read the accounts of the Khivan and Turkoman campaigns of Russia, of our own Afghan wars, even of our insignificant little frontier expeditions. In each of them from 10,000 to 50,000 camels, mules, and horses were used, and the cost ran to something like £20 a-month for each British soldier and two-thirds of that sum for each Indian sepoy employed.

"No small expeditionary movement of troops at either extremity of our Indian empire takes place without considerable dislocation of transport—especially coolies, mules, and bullocks—from end to end of India. If a column is wanted in Burmah to chastise Lushais or Chins on our extreme Eastern frontier, mules and coolies are sent from the Panjab. The annual revictualling of the 2000 or 3000 men in garrison at Gilgit and Chilas on the Pamir frontier involves the collection of pony transport throughout a dozen of the western and central districts of the Panjab, as well as a cruel *corvée* in Kashmir. In 1868, to put one weak brigade in front of Magdala, 400 miles from Annesley Bay—the march being through a friendly, inhabited, but difficult country—we employed only a few thousand troops, and the five months' campaign cost us seven or eight millions sterling. Taxation in Russia is crushingly heavy on the *muzhik;* in India, heavy on agriculturists — that is, the masses. Neither empire can raise much more money without grave

risk.[1] How, then, can either go to war with each other in the midst of barren mountains or desert plains, with hundreds of miles of similar country

[1] On May 31, 1893, the Indian Currency Commission made its report to the Secretary of State for India. *Inter alia*, it considered the possibility of increasing taxation. It passed in review all taxes which were or had been in use in India, and found that none could be safely enhanced or revived: to increase the land revenue was "impracticable," though the fall in silver had benefited the producer; to enhance the salt-tax, "the main reserve in case of war," was objectionable, it being "in the nature of a poll-tax, which falls on all classes, but presses most heavily on the very poor"; to augment the stamp duties would "not be right," as they were already "a tax on the administration of justice"; to increase the excise duties would "stimulate illicit practices" and "promote intemperance"; to reimpose import duties would "excite the least opposition," and might "even be popular," but would be resisted in England; to revive export duties would not be "sound in principle"; to double the income-tax would "produce very great discontent" and promote "agitation." As to new taxes, a large revenue might be raised on sugar and tobacco, though to procure it "would involve constant and vexatious interference with the people"; a succession duty might be tried, but would be very difficult to work, and it would take "a long time to develop any practical scheme." In paragraph 44 of their report the Commissioners summed up their conclusions as follows:— Possibility of increasing taxation in India.

"44. We are not in a position to determine whether the apprehensions expressed to us that increased taxation cannot be resorted to without grave mischief are to the full extent well founded, or whether they are exaggerated. But it is not easy to see how the burden of the added taxation which would be requisite to counterbalance the fall in exchange could be made to rest on those who might with the most justice be subjected to it, or how the added revenue could be provided except in a manner opposed to sound principles of taxation. Even if it be thought that the political dangers anticipated are the offspring of somewhat exaggerated fears, it is at least possible that they may be under-estimated. Representations that a great increase of taxation was due to what has been erroneously called the 'tribute' paid to this country would add sensibly to the danger, and afford an inviting theme for agitators. It is of importance to recognise the fact that the public revenues of India, as of most Asiatic countries, largely consist of elements of income which have not the character of taxation as that term is used in Western Europe, and that it has been through

behind? War would mean exhaustion and insolvency for both, with no other result.

Jalalabad might be occupied.

"At most we concede that circumstances may arise which would render an advance to the neighbourhood of Jalalabad advisable, because there, we conceive, you can find at small cost a 'scientific frontier,' can close all approaches from Kabul on the west, and from Chitral down the Kunar river on the north, and can there block, with the help to the south of the wall of the Sufed Koh and our position in and above the Kurram valley, both the Kabul (Khyber) and Kurram river approaches, the only practicable lines of invasion for Russia, with Peshawar, the eye of the Panjab, if not of India itself, as the first objective. By stopping for good and all near Jalalabad and extending the railway to our chosen positions, we should remove the theatre of possible war to places well outside India, where battles might be fought and won or lost, and impress the native mind as little as did

the natural growth of these revenues that the increased expenditure of recent years has been met to a considerable extent."—Supplement to the Gazette of India, June 26, 1893.

Increase of inland postal rates in India.

The Commissioners did not consider the question of raising postal rates in India; but as they are the cheapest in the British empire, if not in the world, and as the Indian Exchequer, unlike Great Britain and most States, derives no profits from the Post-office, it seems reasonable that, failing taxation, the postal rates should be raised. In India a letter can now be sent from end to end of the empire, say 2000 miles, for less than a halfpenny, and a post-card for less than a farthing. In little England the lowest letter rate is a penny, and post-card rate a halfpenny. Were the existing Indian half and quarter anna rates doubled, the charges would still be lower than those in Great Britain, and the Exchequer would make a profit of probably more than half a million "conventional" sterling.

the British disaster at Maiwand in 1880: we should throw on Russia the expensive task of holding, or attempting to hold, that hornet's nest, Northern Afghanistan. If she attempted to occupy Kabul permanently, her garrison there would be cut off from its Trans-Hindu-Kush supports for the six winter months. Unable to retreat, it would be easily destroyed by the Afghans with or without assistance from us. Whilst Russia would be hated by them, we should retain or gain their goodwill by leaving Kabul inviolate and supplying them liberally with arms, officers (if wanted), and money, so long as they should show front against their invader. We should, moreover, be in a position to exhaust Russia and stir up constant disaffection against her throughout Afghanistan and beyond, thus reversing the ordinary rule of the last fifty years.

"Whilst conceding that the occupation of a more forward position on the Peshawar-Kabul route may become advisable, we oppose the present flag-planting policy upon several other possible lines of communication — *e.g.*, along the Zhob, Gumal, Tochi, and Kurram routes. Why make more holes than necessary in our natural armour of inhospitable mountains? Why stud those hills with costly useless outposts, each one of which wastes our resources, locks up valuable troops, and would in war-time be an additional cause of expense and anxiety to us? Why not let those passes and their tribesmen alone? Without roads no army can

Useless holes in our armour.

use those hills. Why not let sleeping dogs lie? Russia has only one line of communication with all her Central Asian possessions; India already has two into Afghanistan: let those two suffice.

The whole question one of money.

"We admit that the maintenance of our advanced and increased garrisons, in which the British element would necessarily be stronger than the usual one-third British to two-thirds native, would also tend to the exhaustion of India; but at the worst our rate of expenditure would be lower than that of Russia, and we could stand it better and longer. We should be holding our own in selected strong places upon our 'scientific frontier,' in close railway touch with our sources of supply in India; whilst Russia would be struggling to maintain herself, and find means to attack us directly and by intrigue in India, at a long distance from her bases, in difficult tangles of mountains, amidst well-armed and hostile tribes. The idea that by leaving Russia to crack the Afghan nut she would find in its kernel splendid material for tens of thousands of recruits, whom she could push forwards on India in advance of her regular troops, is nonsense. If they would enlist at all, they would prefer good pay and kind treatment from us to a starvation wage, rough treatment, and poor food from Russia. If they were armed and encouraged to fight as guerilla bands, they would plunder Russians as readily as English. It would be a case of *quis custodiet ipsos custodes.* Russia could neither pay them nor control them, and would undoubtedly find it cheapest

in the end to attempt to draw the teeth of her own making—that is, to disarm them or cow them by heavy chastisement into innocuousness. Eventually she would have to retire baffled and discredited; and so would end the invasion of India by Russia, the prevention of the possibility of which has already cost India, from missions, wars, and preparations, seventy millions sterling."

Reply to arguments of the no-advance school.

If these premisses are right; if our position in the Peshawar valley is itself strong and defensible; if a stronger one can be found in the neighbourhood of Jalalabad; and if the expense of conquering and holding Afghanistan would be so exhausting,—the imaginary arguments of the no-advance school should prevail. Unfortunately the majority of military experts deny the soundness of these premisses, and the balance of argument appears to be on the side of such critics. Northern Afghanistan has now been surveyed and mapped, and it is established beyond controversy that, India being protected on the Kandahar side, all other practicable approaches converge near Kabul, present such great physical difficulties that a Russian army marching on Kabul could only concentrate Cis-Hindu-Kush by driblets or by unconnected passage through several long tortuous mountain routes, and that consequently a comparatively small army operating from Kabul could destroy the invader in detail as each column debouched from the mountain defiles which had held it for days or weeks in their narrow embrace.

The impression that because the Austrians, acting

Erroneous impression about battle of Sadowa.

on a similar idea, were beaten at Sadowa in 1866, such a defensive plan of campaign is radically defective, is totally erroneous. The Austrians were defeated through their own want of cohesion, inferior generalship, and the superiority of the Prussian needle-gun over the Austrian muzzle-loader. They had a magnificent chance of destroying the Prussians in detail, but were unable to make proper use of it. Though it is true that with Asiatics the attack has, *cæteris paribus*, a more than ordinary greater probability of success than the defence, still, in the case of meeting a struggling and straggling invader at the mouths of the defiles of the Hindu Kush with a perfectly organised, equipped, and rationed force from Kabul, all the probabilities would be in favour of the defence.

Occupation of a route, not a country, necessary.

Then as to the difficulty and expense of conquering and holding Northern Afghanistan, it is contended that such an extended measure is unnecessary, and even if carried out would cost very much less than the no-advance school suppose.

Cost of holding Kabul over-estimated.

To begin with, the population of Kabul itself, and of the cultivated valleys in its vicinity, is largely Persian- not Pashto-speaking, is accustomed to the heavy hand of a master, and consequently amenable to rule, is essentially, whether of Afghan or other stock, commercial and agricultural, and would prefer English justice of the simple popular kind obtaining in Baluchistan, to Amir's oppression. It would thus be easy and cheap to absorb Afghanistan were it given a popular tribal form of government, and not

over-governed as India unhappily is. It would also be easy to subdue and even tame the Afghans did we adopt a modified Russian system, and, should necessity arise, make an example of any offending tribe by destroying it, or better, by deporting its leading families to some distant settlement. It would also be possible to disarm the most incorrigible Afghan tribes were we sufficiently severe with them at the outset, if occasion for punishing them occurred.

Our Afghan wars no criterion.

The common impression of cost and of the persistence of national opposition are probably erroneous, because derived from two wars conceived and carried out on principles which were bound to turn even an effeminate people into a nation of fighting patriots. In the first war we forced an unpopular puppet on Afghanistan, upheld his authority by foreign bayonets, and from the outset announced that we intended to withdraw from the country as soon as convenient. In addition, every military blunder which incompetence and vacillation could commit was made. In our second war we had no policy, and, owing to party quarrels in England, could not tell the Afghans why we had invaded their country or how long we intended to remain in it; hence they were all constrained to go against us, otherwise on our withdrawal the propertied classes, who would have preferred to side with us, would have been treated as traitors by their poorer clansmen, who had opposed us.

On the whole, then, should Afghanistan ever be

Author's opinion.

partially dismembered and reduced to its Cis-Hindu-Kush portion in the north and the deserts and oases between the Helmand and the Siah Koh or other delimited boundary south and east of the Herat valley, it would appear politic that we should at once advance to the neighbourhood of Jalalabad, Jagdalak, or Gandamak, prepared, should necessity arise, to garrison Kabul, Bamian, and intermediate points. We should make our advance, if possible, as friends and allies of the Afghans, but if necessary as their benevolent master. Such a policy would reassure India, and should be acceptable to the Afghans themselves, whose tribal leaders or councils would, under an extension of the wise Baluchistan system, gain more powers of self-government than they now exercise under the autocratic rule of their present Amir. That by the military occupation of the Khyber route to Jalalabad, Jagdalak, or Gandamak in the first instance, and ultimately, if necessary, to Kabul and Bamian, the conterminous Hindu Kush border, professedly so desired by Russia as the consummation of her Central Asia policy, would be achieved, is a circumstance which would not affect the merits of the case.

Our advance would considerably add to our military expenditure and the annually increasing difficulty of governing India according to Western ideas, with the superadded vagaries of party action in Parliament. But under every conceivable view of the situation which will arise, should Russia approach closer than she at present is to India, our

military expenses would be far greater than they now are, and it is probable that by adopting the policy here advocated they would be less, and our defensive position stronger, than should we, when the time for action comes, hang back and let Russia seize what we should fear to take for ourselves.

Our obligations to Kabul Government.

The final questions raised in the opening chapter concern our obligations to the Amir. Are we bound to defend the integrity of his kingdom against encroachment by Russia? and if so, can we do so, and should we, and would we, fulfil our engagements? The answer to the first is a plain affirmative. The promise was originally made in 1880, repeated in more definite language at Rawalpindi in 1885, and has recently been, it is believed, again still more emphatically confirmed when the Durand Mission was at Kabul in 1893. We are, then, absolutely committed to prevent Russia from establishing herself in the Hari Rud valley or in Afghan Turkestan, provided that the Amir or ruler of the day follows our advice and direction in his foreign policy. This he did in 1885-87, when his Turkoman boundary was delimited; and this he is understood to be now doing, though required to give up territory in his possession, in respect of the Pamir boundary dispute with Russia.

Our duty and interest coincide.

Nations, like individuals, sometimes commit breach of contract when their immediate interests would suffer from its observance. In the case of our contract with Afghanistan evasion would be easy for us, as reasons would be forthcoming for

holding that the Government of Kabul had not fulfilled its part of the bargain, had broken faith with us by entering into secret negotiations with Russia, or had, by misgovernment, intrigue, or rashness, given that Power justification for occupying some point of Afghan territory. However, our permanent, unchanging, and unchangeable interests are all in favour of our thoroughly carrying out our engagement if we can, no matter what provocation or inducement Russia might have for overstepping her present frontier line, and no matter what temporary misrule or anarchy might prevail in any part of Afghanistan. It so happens that from end to end of the common boundary of Russia and Afghanistan the conterminous neighbourhoods are thinly populated, either desert, poor pasturage, or barren mountain; hence any dispute which may arise on the border would be of the paltriest description, and involve interests the market value of which would be over-estimated at a thousand pounds. This being so, if Russia or Afghanistan makes much of some border incident and refuses settlement by arbitration or manipulates a failure, the object would be to raise a political quarrel and test whether England intended to fulfil her engagement or not. Along our North-Western frontier we for thirty years (1849-79) maintained a close-border system, and, notwithstanding the frequent misconduct of powerful trans-border tribes, found it easy to protect our subjects without annexing an acre beyond the boundary line, which we had taken over

as successors to the Sikhs. Russia can with greater ease do the same, if she wishes, along her comparatively peaceful and thinly peopled common boundary with Afghanistan.

We cannot fight in Afghan Turkestan or Herat valley.

But should she overstep that line and occupy points in the Hari Rud valley or Afghan Turkestan, how are we to prevent her? How are we to fulfil our guarantee of the integrity of Afghanistan? It is outside sane statesmanship to suppose that we should send troops from India to garrison any parts of those distant territories, or expel Russia from them by direct force of arms. India could not meet the expenditure, and England would not. To do so would require a large army, half to hold the line or lines of communications, and half to operate from 400 to 600 miles beyond our present frontier. No matter what the alliance with the Kabul ruler might be, our supply convoys and road-posts would have to be guarded in strength; just as if we were campaigning in a hostile country. No long-continued trust could be put on the friendly disposition of the tribes, unless their friendships were secured by liberal subsidies and a constant show of overwhelming force. Assuming, then, that we should not attempt to turn and keep Russia out of Northern Afghanistan by direct attack, what should we do?

Is Russia vulnerable to us?

The obvious answer suggests itself, We should go to war with Russia all over the world. Yes, but how are we to attack her? She is powerful on land, we on sea. Bismarck's comparison will be re-

membered—a war between us without allies would be a fight between a whale and an eagle. Opinion is divided as to whether we could single-handed reduce Russia to terms. We might blockade some of her ports, destroy her sea trade such as it is,—even though by so doing our mercantile marine would lose its Russian carrying business,—and attack some of her ports—Vladivostok, for instance, or the coveted winter harbour in Korea, had she acquired it by then. We should also certainly encourage the national resistance of the Afghans by large subsidies, gifts of arms, guns, and war materials, and release Afghan troops for the front by garrisoning on behalf of the Amir, should he wish it, positions such as Kandahar, Ghazni, and Jalalabad.

The Amir's army.

The Amir's army numbers about 50,000 men, all excellent material under fair discipline. Their numbers might be doubled were regular pay assured to them.

The weak point of the Afghan army is the officers, who are brave but ignorant; and the men know it. This grave defect would presumably be partially remedied by the loan of English Pashto- and Persian-speaking officers from our Indian army. In any case Russia would have to maintain a large force in Afghan Turkestan, and that would be a drain upon her resources. The fact, too, that important coast positions like Vladivostok were liable to capture would cause Russia to send troops to the extremities of the empire, augment her expenditure, and hasten an honourable and enduring peace. On the

whole, then, it seems probable, in the unfortunate event of a war between us, we should be able to find vulnerable points in Russia's armour and to gradually exhaust her.[1]

[1] The following extract from a recent letter to myself from a distinguished military officer, whose name I withhold, not having his permission to mention it, will show how important it is in his opinion that we should maintain the integrity of Afghanistan, and how difficult it would be for us to collect at short notice an army of 50,000 British troops for service in that country :—

"The maintenance of the *status quo* in regard to Afghanistan is of the utmost strategical importance to us, as, so long as it is maintained, the invasion of India by Russia, in the usual sense of the word invasion—*i.e.*, a rapid continuous operation—is physically impossible. This of course means that so long as things remain as they are in Afghanistan, and so long as we command the sea, we shall have time to enlist and prepare any force that may be necessary to deal with Russia on the North-Western frontier of India, and we can therefore afford to keep our military establishment here on a comparatively economical scale. We want troops, not forts.

"Many men who only know war from books, or from having seen operations conducted in thickly inhabited countries, or on a small scale (as in Afghanistan in 1878-80), may dispute what I say about the impossibility of a Russian invasion of India at present. I base my opinion about it upon what I have myself seen of the difficulties of transport in several campaigns ; but it could be easily proved by figures, by taking the force which would be necessary to ensure success against our present means of defence, and working out the details of the transport necessary for such a force.

"Since, then, the maintenance of the *status quo* in Afghanistan is of such immense advantage to us, it is not surprising that we are trying to maintain it by every means in our power, that we have even promised to defend Afghanistan against the Russians, or that sanguine people among us contemplate operations up to or beyond the Hindú Kush—which are really just as much out of the question for us under existing circumstances as the invasion of India is for the Russians.

"Of course our position in regard to all this would be altogether changed if we had railways from India up to an advanced position in Afghanistan. We could then defend Afghanistan ; but the great advantage of the present state of things would have vanished, as we should then, in order to meet the requirements of our new position, have to be ready to mobilise our defensive army on the necessary

Further speculations idle because conditions uncertain.

Speculation on the subject is, however, of little value, because the issues of such a war would largely depend upon the action of other nations. That they should agree to keep the ring, and leave

scale *at once*, which would mean an additional military expenditure that might be large.

"Evidently, therefore, we ought to do everything in our power to keep Afghanistan *in statu quo;* but we ought also to avoid having to advance into that country if we possibly can do so.

"I feel sure that we are right to declare that any unprovoked attack on Afghanistan will be a *casus belli*, and that we will defend Afghanistan under such circumstances to the best of our ability; but how we are to do it, is a question that can only be answered by people who know several things that are unknown to the 'man in the street.'

"I think it must be clear to every one that in any case we ought to have our military arrangements in, and in connection with, India on such a footing that we can mobilise an army of sufficient strength to defend our North-Western frontier, within the time that will be available for that purpose.

"So long as Afghanistan remains *in statu quo* the time available would be considerable, and even with our present clumsy arrangements we would pull through all right, though at great expense probably. . . . The great thing is, that a fully thought-out plan should be agreed to between the Government of India and that at home for the despatch to India, on the declaration of war, of such reinforcements as will be necessary.

"I will not trouble you with technicalities, but I will merely say that 50,000 men to land in six weeks after the declaration of war, and the same number six months thereafter, is what I think would be wanted to make India safe under actual conditions. The greater part of the first contingent would merely be required in the first place to set free the trained garrison of India from the duty of holding the country against internal enemies, and need only be *very partially trained.* They would be obtained by inducing the following to inscribe their names in peace-time for a campaign in India, &c., when required, viz.:—

"Say 25,000 members of Volunteer corps at home, of all ranks.
20,000 of all ranks of the Militia and Yeomanry at home.
5000 men from the Cape and Australia.

"This would make 50,000, and there would doubtless be some men—8000 or 10,000—available from the home army after the reserves (about 80,000 nominally) were called up; so that an actual effective of

the Asiatic rivals to waste each other, is unlikely. It is also uncertain, did we hold back, whether the Afghans would, after a first defeat, continue the fight for Herat and their Trans-Hindu-Kush dependency. They might, in their disappointment at our apparent breach of faith with them, make terms with Russia or sulk within their ethnic confines. In such case we should have a free hand to annex, once and for all, up to the line which we should be prepared to defend with all the resources of the empire.

50,000 could be depended on. The second contingent of 50,000 would be enlisted, and got into shape to release the first from their garrison duty, during the time available before they were sent out.

"I have satisfied myself by inquiries among the Volunteers, Militia, &c., at home, and among the colonists, that the foregoing proposals are perfectly practicable, and I think it is to them and not to complicated strategical questions about Afghanistan that all good men should direct the mind of the British public. In fact, first get your army, and then settle how you are going to use it, or at all events don't waste all your time in arguing about visionary strategy, and in building fortifications, when you have not got the army either to carry out your strategical ideas—however you settle them—or to man your works.

"Nothing happens but the unexpected, and no matter how things turn out, we shall be all right if we can mobilise *in time* an army that is efficient *and strong enough;* but without it we shall be up a tree in any case."

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CHAPTER XIV.

A SHORT SUMMING UP.

TWO DANGERS BEFORE US IN INDIA, ONE INTERNAL, THE OTHER EXTERNAL—OVER-GOVERNMENT OF INDIA—EFFECT ON CLASSES AND MASSES — EXPLOITATION OF LATTER — EFFECT ON HINDUS AND MUSALMANS — A MORE SYMPATHETIC SYSTEM REQUIRED — INDIA'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES—THE TAMING OF THE TRIBES ON OUR NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER—MAGNITUDE OF THE TASK—EXTERNAL DANGER FROM APPROACH OF RUSSIA—HER INABILITY TO USE HER FULL STRENGTH DUE TO TZARDOM — CONFLICTING INTERESTS OF RUSSIA AND GREAT BRITAIN IN ASIA — A PROTECTORATE OVER AFGHANISTAN FORCED ON US—PRESSURE PUT ON INDIA BY RUSSIA —MAINTENANCE OF THE *STATUS QUO* A NECESSITY FOR US—CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH RUSSIA WILL TAKE HERAT AND AFGHAN TURKESTAN—COURSES OPEN TO US WITH RUSSIA IN POSSESSION OF BOTH OR EITHER—CONSEQUENCES TO THE BRITISH DOMINION IN INDIA IF RUSSIA OBTAINS THE HINDU KUSH LINE FOR HER FRONTIER—APPEAL OF INDIAN MASSES TO BRITISH DEMOCRACY.

BEFORE concluding, it may be as well to bring together the points which appear to be of most importance. They can, perhaps, be best summarised in the form of propositions.

Over-government of India.

I. India is a continent larger than Europe, exclusive of Russia, inhabited by 300 million persons of different races, tribes, and castes, and of varying degrees of intelligence, mutually exclusive and an-

tagonistic, but all under the bondage of ancient customs, beliefs, and prejudices, those of the Hindus dating back from prehistoric times.

A handful of English sojourners have, within the last hundred years, given rest and security to the otherwise seething, struggling mass of humanity just described, whose happiness and prosperity depend on the peaceful continuance of our rule over them. Our dominion in India is now threatened by two dangers, the one internal, the other external. The former is evidenced by the gradual estrangement of the people from us—an estrangement due partly to our over-government of them on hard, uniform, Western lines, and partly to the spread of knowledge and the consequent dissatisfaction with environments which knowledge often creates. The difficulties inherent in our position as rulers of India on British progressive principles are annually becoming greater, owing to the increasing tendency of groups of irresponsible persons, exercising political influence in England, to interfere, through Parliament, in the government of our dependency. Their action, whether arising from commercial selfishness, impulsive philanthropy, or other motives, sometimes forces measures on India which are obnoxious to the true interests or strong prejudices of her people. India is statistically prosperous, it is true, but it is no less true that the masses are being exploited by the classes, and that both are discontented, the former because of their social degradation, the latter from disappointed aspirations.

Classes and masses under our system.

II. Broadly, the masses are rural, the classes urban. The former are agriculturists who have lived for centuries, or even ages, as village communities; the latter are the traders, money-lenders, and educated men of the towns. Under our system rural society is gradually being disintegrated, and the profits of agriculture are passing from the small producers to capitalists, from the ignorant many to the knowing few. The greatest sufferers are perhaps the 57 millions of Muhammadans of India, who are collectively inferior to Hindus in all qualities—manliness excepted—necessary for success under a reign of law. Their superiority as soldiers enabled them to achieve empire and retain it for centuries, until our dominion superseded theirs. With the establishment of the *pax Britannica* their occupation was gone.

Hindus more prosperous than Muhammadans.

Under the new *régime*, in learning, farming, and business generally, they were no match for the quicker-witted and more laborious Hindus, whose leaders, conscious of the superior solidarity and wealth of their people, would now forcibly hasten the social degradation of their quondam masters and to all time religious opponents. The chronic hostility between Hindu and Musalman is becoming more and more embittered by the reversal of their respective worldly conditions. Our presence alone enforces a truce between them. Both duty and interest—the latter on the *divide et impera* principle—require us to save the Muhammadans of India from further decadence. Moreover, seeing that the

peasantry of the Western Panjab are Muhammadans, and that they will be the first Indians to be influenced by political changes occurring amongst their neighbours and co-religionists in Afghanistan, the peace of India will be strengthened by any measure which will render the Panjab Musalmans less dissatisfied with our rule than they now are.

A more sympathetic system required to popularise our rule.

III. Though our hold upon the sympathies of India is now weaker, physically it is stronger than at any former period. It is, in fact, so strong that our expulsion or edging out through a general upheaval, whether due to the success of the Pan-Hindu movement still in its infancy, or other causes, is inconceivable except after a long course of foolish or unpopular government. A distinct tendency to both mistakes exists, but will probably be discontinued, now that the mischief arising from overdosing conservative Asiatics with Western and democratic nostrums is coming home to the great common-sense of the British nation. It is reasonable to hope, then, that by a sympathetic and discriminating administration contentment will be restored to British India, and that consequently the growing number of agitators and politicians will be deprived of any cry which will find a general response in the minds of the ignorant and superstitious peasantry of our dependency. Should the hope be fulfilled, the external danger now menacing the peace of India will—if kept at its present distance—fail to disquiet her peoples, and may be

a means of binding them and us together into one united community of loyal subjects of the Queen-Empress.

India's bankruptcy possible.

IV. Were India's troubles only internal they would be serious. Amongst others is a possibility of bankruptcy, due to the depreciation of silver and the annual payment to England of 18 millions sterling, or nearly one-third of the Imperial Indian revenues. The recent desperate attempt to arrest the former evil by closing the mints, and consequently converting the rupee into a token coin, is still in its experimental stage. Whatever the issue, India will be unable, without additional taxation, to pay her way or meet the expenditure required for the defence of her North-Western approaches. In the Tariff Act of 1894 cotton goods find no place, although they represent nearly one-half of India's imports. Their inclusion was demanded by all India; their exclusion was ordered by the Home Government in fear of the votes of the 350,000 electors of Lancashire. Thus the interests of 300 millions of our Queen-Empress's Asiatic subjects were sacrificed to those of a handful of her Majesty's English subjects. It is, however, certain that the sense of justice of the British nation will not long permit the selfish interests of one English county to override the reasonable demand of the Indian empire. We may assume that cotton imports into India will be taxed in 1895, just as other imports are now taxed.

As to the 18 millions sterling of home liabilities,

their appreciable reduction is doubtless possible but unlikely. The tendency of such charges to increase is inherent under the existing financial subordination of India to England. A proposal that a portion of the British garrison should be directly recruited and maintained by the Government of India might find favour in England, but any fiscal proposition not in consonance with the sacred principle of free trade would be at once negatived, no matter how desirable in the interests of India. It is thus unlikely that any considerable reduction can be made in the home charges, or that additional taxation can be imposed in a form acceptable to the peoples of India, unless the Government of that dependency be given a freer hand in the management of its financial business.

The taming of the tribes on our North-Western frontier.

V. Critical though the financial situation is, India's expenditure is always increasing. One considerable item is in consequence of a new departure on our North-Western frontier—viz., vigorous action in the work of taming and mediatising the independent tribes between our actual and our recently defined political frontiers. These tribes occupy the mountainous belt between the valley of the Indus and the Amir's kingdom—an area, including that superintended from Gilgit, but excluding Baluchistan, of about 40,000 square miles. The population is a round million, split up into a number of independent Pathan tribes, whose fighting manhood is estimated at 200,000 swords and match-

locks. They are to-day nearly as wild, bigoted, and hostile to intruders as they were two generations ago, when, by the annexation of the Panjab, the North-Western frontier of India became conterminous with theirs. We are about to convert them, if possible, into friendly, peaceable neighbours, a task which was beyond the power of all former rulers of Afghanistan or India. Whether the game is worth the candle is questionable, as the tribes generally, excepting the sections on the necessary lines of communication, will always be politically *quantités négligeables*. Baluchistan has, within the last twenty years, been easily pacified and reduced to order, but Pathans are a stiff-necked race compared with Baluches. The latter are light-hearted feudalists, who leave thinking, acting, and praying to their tribal chiefs; the former are fanatical Ishmaelites who respect no authority but force.

Magnitude of the task.

In the last forty years we have sent upwards of a score of punitive expeditions against our Pathan neighbours, but have hitherto made little impression upon them. The discriminating and fastidious humanitarianism with which we have always acted, both in war and peace, has been lost upon the tribes who only understand the *argumentum baculinum* when applied wholesale. To convert them into orderly and useful members of society is a task to which the Government of India has now, wisely or unwisely, put its hand. It is an undertaking which will take time and money, and if done thoroughly,

will prove nearly as difficult and expensive as would be the conquest and retention of Afghanistan itself. There the population is largely non-Afghan, and already accustomed to obey the will of a strong ruler; but the tribes whom we are now about to tame are wholly Afghan, and have been collectively and individually independent for centuries, ever since they first settled in their present mountain fastnesses.

Tzardom a cause of weakness for Russia.

VI. The external danger is, of course, the approach of Russia, a great military Power, towards the North-Western frontier of India. Now, Russia is a poor, overtaxed empire, under a despotic Government, which is worked for the immediate material advantage of the classes—viz., Tzar, Nobility, Tchinovniks, and, in a less degree, the Church and capitalists. The masses are therefore abject and ignorant, and the empire generally is in a state of arrested development, comparable with Europe in feudal times. As a consequence, Russia's immense army is inefficient: the soldiery, though physically strong, enduring, and docile, lack intelligence and spirit, and are a sort of white *fellaheen;* whilst their officers, from the narrowness of their education, want of regulated energy, and the all-pervading corruption of the imperial system, are generally inferior as leaders to those of more advanced nations —notably France, Germany, and Great Britain.

Thus the military strength of the Russian empire is incommensurate with its population and resources,

a fact conspicuously proved in the last Russo-Turkish war, 1878-79 (see pp. 91, 92).

Conflicting interests of Russia and Great Britain in Asia.

VII. From a selfish standpoint it is to the advantage of Great Britain that the existing system of Government should continue in Russia, because that nation is "cribbed, cabined, and confined" by Tzardom. If Russia had a representative Government—a change only possible by slow evolution—the resources and power of her almost homogeneous 120 millions of citizens would soon break down the barriers which the self-interest of numerically weaker States maintain to bar her way to Constantinople and the Mediterranean. Of those opposing nations the most persistent has hitherto been Great Britain, who led the coalition against Russia in the Crimean war, 1854-56, and deprived her of the fruits of victory after she had defeated Turkey in 1878-79. As a means to counteract English hostility in Europe, Russia has been long turning to account England's apprehensions of vulnerability in Asia. Since 1800 the Central Asian policy of both nations has been conflicting—Russia's with a view to offence against India, and England's to protect her dependency against the risk of successful invasion. In effect, curiously enough, both empires have ever since been gravitating towards each other, so that the reduced space now intervening between them ranges from a few miles[1] on

[1] It is here assumed that the 1873 delimitation will be finally ac-

our Gilgit political frontier to 500 miles, or the whole breadth of Afghanistan. Russia has therefore to some extent succeeded in her policy, and can now at any time partially paralyse England in Europe by bringing pressure to bear on England in India.

A protectorate over Afghanistan forced on us.

VIII. The acquisition of Merv by Russia in 1884, and the consequent exposure of Herat, "the key of India," to seizure by a *coup de main*, constrained England, after many years of vacillation, to assume a protectorate over Afghanistan, and to demarcate, in conjunction with Russia, the Russo-Afghan boundary, where not already delimited. The integrity of Afghanistan, whose boundaries have now been clearly defined both with Russia and England in India, has been guaranteed to the Amir of the day so long as he accepts our mentorship in his foreign policy. Great Britain is therefore under an obligation to go to war with Russia should that Power occupy any point within the accepted boundaries of Afghanistan.

Russia's powers of mischief to India past and present.

IX. Including Herat, the Trans-Hindu-Kush part of the Amir's kingdom, roughly amounting to two-fifths of it, is now at Russia's mercy, because that portion, though a dependency of Afghanistan, is dominated by Russia, and inhabited by races alien

cepted, and the Panjah stream be treated as the Oxus boundary between Afghan Wakhan and Russian Pamir territory.

to the Afghans, who would prefer Tzar to Amir as master. Russia is thus already in a position to bring great pressure to bear on India. She can, by occupying Afghan territory just across her own frontier, but 500 inhospitable miles beyond ours, force us, whenever she pleases, to go to war with her, at great initial disadvantage to ourselves. Should we decline the challenge, the alternative of war is that we should "eat dirt" before all Asia, in which case the invasion of India from Russia's new and advanced frontier would be a possibility. We should not forget that Russia's astute diplomacy, long before she had obtained a conterminous boundary with Afghanistan, cost us three wars and one warlike expedition. Of the four, two—in 1838-42 and 1856-57—were undertaken with the object of detaching Herat from Russia's vassal, Persia. The other two were the well-known Afghan wars of 1838-42 and 1878-80. Those wars and the action preceding them cost Russia little, but India quite 50 millions sterling. If, then, Russia, when at a distance from Afghanistan, so bled India with impunity to herself, how much greater are her powers of mischief now that Herat and Afghan Turkestan are both within striking distance, and Great Britain bound by an engagement to uphold the integrity of Afghanistan!

Maintenance of *status quo*

X. As stated on p. 288, "our permanent, unchanging, and unchangeable interests are all in

favour of our thoroughly carrying out our engagement if we can, no matter what provocation or inducement Russia might have for overstepping her present frontier line, and no matter what temporary misrule or anarchy might prevail in any part of Afghanistan." One reason why we should defend the integrity of Afghanistan with all our resources is, that Russia, from her present position, though able to cause us increased military expenditure, and to force us into a war with her, or to neutralise a large part of our small army, can neither seriously threaten nor financially embarrass India; whereas, did we condone her advance to the Hindu Kush, she would do both, and beat us without a battle in the eyes of all Asia.

a necessity for India.

XI. As Russian Central Asia is a vast unproductive territory, just sufficiently garrisoned for local requirements, and its cantonments connected from the Caspian only as far as Samarkand by a single line of badly constructed railway,—the bases of supplies being in the Caucasus and European Russia,—the expense of maintaining the army of occupation will continue heavy until communications are much improved—a work of time and money, of which latter Russia has little. It is probable, therefore, that for many years to come Russia will not attempt to disturb the existing *status quo*, provided that she believes that Great Britain is prepared to fight to preserve it. That

The nearer approach of Russia improbable if made a *casus belli*.

belief would cease to be entertained were England involved in a great war, or the peace of India seriously disturbed from within, as in the Mutiny.

Courses open to us under certain eventualities.

XII. If from any cause Russia occupies Afghan territory, and war ensues between us, her ejectment by direct attack being impracticable, we shall only be able indirectly to fulfil our guarantee by granting the Afghans subsidies and munitions of war so long as they show front against the enemy, whilst we ourselves strike at Russia all over the world, wherever she may be vulnerable to a naval Power. In the event of the Afghans being beaten, or declining to fight unless we send an army into Afghan Turkestan or the Herat valley, we should have a free hand to continue the war, partition Afghanistan, annex only up to chosen positions—indifferent to events happening beyond them—or await attack within our political frontier. Which course would be the wiser would depend on several contingencies; but if we two rivals are alone in the field, and India is loyal or quiescent, the prolongation of the war until Russia should succumb from financial exhaustion would presumably be the best, and ultimately cheapest, policy for us to pursue.

Consequences to England in India if Russia secures the Hindu Kush boundary.

XIII. We used to regard Great Britain and India as safeguarded by nature against invasion, the former by her position as an island, and the latter by her girdle of difficult mountains, and distance from any European Power. The belief

is still potent for Great Britain, but exploded for India. With Russian outposts on the Hindu Kush, and France as our neighbour in Siam and rival for supremacy at sea, India would be, as Mr Curzon calls it, "between two fires," and would no longer be able to keep her military expenditure under that of a great Continental Power. In such case, whatever course we should adopt would make no great difference in our military charges, though the balance of argument is against our standing still, and in favour of our occupying Kandahar and Jalalabad or other position in its neighbourhood, and ultimately, perhaps, even Kabul and—if not forestalled—Bamian. To meet the extra millions required for defence purposes, all Civil services would be starved, and the material progress of India arrested, whilst additional taxation would be imposed, probably on salt, imports, tobacco, and possibly postal rates would be raised. Such extra burdens, in conjunction with Russia's closer proximity, would create a general unrest and anticipation of change throughout India, which would increase the pre-existing difficulties of its foreign government, and render our position as rulers of India insecure.

The security of India is in the hands of the British democracy.

XIV. The possession of India has given Great Britain the primacy amongst the nations. She won that position by the independent action of a succession of her most adventurous sons, preserved it in 1857 by the united strength of the nation, and has since by good government extended and consolidated

her power in Asia into the most beneficent empire which the world has ever known.

Whether the internal and external dangers which are now beginning to threaten the peace of that empire will be resolutely met and removed, or allowed to grow in force and volume until disruption becomes imminent, is in the hands of the British democracy. If they insist that India shall have rest and security, they must make their will clear to their parliamentary representatives, who are accustomed to spend weeks in debating in full strength some nice point in home government, but habitually leave the Imperial concerns of India to be disposed of "in a thin House," "as summarily and as light-heartedly as if the proceedings were those of the debating club of a college rather than the senate of a great empire," and thus sometimes undo "in a couple of hours the work of years." [1]

The prayer of the Indian peoples.

Were the dumb masses of India capable of voicing their feelings and desires, they would address the democracy of Great Britain in some such language as follows: "We number one-fifth of the human race, and are divided into many clashing nationalities and castes, speaking different tongues and cherishing different sentiments and prejudices—all foolish, perhaps, in your eyes, yet each held by us as a most precious inheritance handed down from an antiquity unknown in European history. Of late years the tendency in governing us has been to ignore our past and to treat us as one

[1] See extract from Lord Lansdowne's warning to England, p. 41.

united people ripe for institutions such as yours. You have assumed that what may be good for Englishmen must be good for Asiatics, except when their respective interests diverge. But it is not so. What may be suitable for your free, enlightened, compact, and homogeneous nation, is often intolerable for the ignorant, superstitious medley of peoples who inhabit our continent. If you are sincere in asserting that you would rule us for our own welfare alone, we pray you to give effect to your wishes. See that our interests be no longer subordinated to those of party or commerce in England; that our customs and even weaknesses be duly respected and protected; that the land and its fruits be not alienated from the agriculturists; that our industries be encouraged; and that if more money is wanted, it be raised by indirect and not direct taxation. Further, as it is true that the nearer approach of Russia to our Indus frontier would unsettle our minds, weaken your authority, and increase expenditure, we wish all concerned to know that if your administration gives us rest and contentment, we shall, under all circumstances, be loyal to our Queen-Empress, and fight faithfully in conjunction with your soldiers to keep Russia at her present distance from India. Finally, we would impress upon all of you that, like most Asiatics, we regard representative government as impracticable for India, and are happiest under a firm, benevolent, and conservative despotism."

APPENDIX.

PUBLICATIONS READ OR CONSULTED.

BESIDES works of reference, such as *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, *Hunter's Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *The Statesman's Year-Book*, *Whittaker's Almanack*, *Hand-book of the Russian Troops in Asia*, I looked up Magazine and Review articles, Parliamentary Blue-Books, *Proceedings* Royal and Scottish Geographical Societies, Panjab *Administration Reports*, and back files of leading journals known to be authorities on Indo-Afghan subjects—e.g., *The Times*, *The Pioneer* (Allahabad), *The Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), *The Englishman* (Calcutta).

Of books read or consulted by me, the following are short descriptions of the most useful, in order of year of publication :—

Turkey (Story of the Nations Series). By Stanley Lane Poole. 1861. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

Russo-Indian Question. By F. Trench. 1869. (Macmillan & Co.)

External Policy of India. By J. W. Wyllie. 1875. (Smith, Elder, & Co.)

England and Russia in the East. By Sir Henry Rawlinson. 1875. (John Murray.)

Russian Turkestan, &c. By E. Schuyler. 2 vols. 1876. (Sampson Low & Co.)

Russia. By Mackenzie Wallace. 1877. (Cassell & Co.)

History of Afghanistan. By G. B. Malleson. 1878. (W. H. Allen & Co.)

Invasions of India from Central Asia. Anonymous. 1879. (Richard Bentley & Son.)

Afghanistan. By H. W. Bellew. 1879. (Sampson Low & Co.)
Races of Afghanistan. By H. W. Bellew. 1880. (Trübner & Co.)
Russian Campaigns against the Akhal Tekke Turkomans. By Charles Marvin. 1880. (Allen & Co.)
Merv and the Man-stealing Turkomans. By Charles Marvin. 1881.
Afghan War of 1879-80. By H. Hensman. 1881. (Allen & Co.)
Life of Lord Lawrence. By R. Bosworth Smith. *2 vols. 1883.* (Smith, Elder, & Co.)
History of Russia (translated). By Alfred Rambaud. *3 vols.* (Sampson Low & Co.)
Russia in Central Asia (translated). By Hugo Stumm. *1885.* (Harrison & Sons.)
Coming Struggle for India. By A. Vámbéry. 1885. (Cassell & Co.)
Russian Central Asia. By H. Landsell. 2 vols. 1885.
Musalmans and Moneylenders. By S. S. Thorburn. 1886. (W. Blackwood & Sons.)
Afghan Boundary Commission. By A. C. Yate. 1887. (W. Blackwood & Sons.)
Russia in Central Asia. By G. Curzon. 1889. (Longmans & Co.)
Impressions of Russia. By Georg Brandes. 1889. (Walter Scott.)
Expansion of England. By J. R. Seeley. 1890. (Macmillan & Co.)
Russia (Story of the Nations Series). By W. R. Morfill. 1890. (T. Fisher Unwin.)
Foreign Policy of Europe. By Lewis Appleton. 1891. (Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.)
Russian Characteristics. By E. B. Lanin. 1892. (Chapman & Hall.)
Imperial Defence. By Sir C. Dilke and Spenser Wilkinson. 1892. (Macmillan & Co.)
Persia. By G. Curzon. 2 vols. 1892. (Longmans & Co.)
Rival Powers (translated). By J. Popowski. 1893. (A. Constable & Co.)
British Dominion in India. By Sir Alfred Lyall. 1894. (John Murray.)
Great Alternative. By Spenser Wilkinson. 1894. (Sonnenschein.)

For a comprehensive and carefully arranged list of books on Central Asian subjects, complete up to 1889, see Appendix VII. of Mr George Curzon's *Russia in Central Asia.*

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